THE BEACON OF BASRA

Imām Ibn al-Jawzī

DĀR AS-SUNNAH CLASSIC COLLECTION

THE BEACON OF BASRA

ETIQUETTE, WISDOM AND ASCETICISM OF ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ

Imām Ibn al-Jawzī

رحمه الله

دار السنة

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It has been reported that ʿĀ'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhā*), heard al-Ḥasan speaking and remarked:

'Who is it that speaks the words of the trustworthy people?'

al-Ḥāfiẓ
Abū'l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī [d. 597AH]

THE BEACON OF BASRA

Etiquette, Wisdom and Asceticism of Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī

Being a translation of Imām Ibn al-Jawzī's
'Ādāb al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī wa zuhduhu wa mawā'izhu'

دار السنة

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رحمه الله تعالى

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Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Jawzī

His Name and Lineage

He is Abū'l-Faraj Jāmal al-Dīn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn al-Jawzī al-Qurashī al-Tamimi al-Bakrī from the family of Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr *al-Ṣiddīq*, al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī.[1]

His Birth and Upbringing

He was born in 509 or 510 A.H. Upon reaching adolescence, his aunt took him to Ibn Nāṣir from whom he learned a great deal. He came to love preaching while barely having reached the age of puberty, and from then started to give sermons to the people.

His father passed away when he was three years old so his aunt took care of him. His relatives were copper merchants so at times

[1] *Dhail al-Rauḍatain*, p.21, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, p. 13/26.

in hadith hearings he would write his name as ʿAbdu'l-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣaffār [i.e.The Coppersmith].

His first ḥadīth hearing was in 556 A.H., as cited by al-Dhahabī.[2]

While still very young he became known as a religious person who would not socialise with anyone and would not eat from any food whose source was doubtful. He would only leave his house for prayer and he would not play with other kids. He was a person of high determination and ambition. He spent all his life busy in seeking knowledge, preaching and authoring.[3]

His Teachers

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Jawzī has already introduced his teachers in his book *Mashyakhat Ibn al-Jawzī* [i.e. the scholars who taught Ibn al-Jawzī] where he listed many of them. In the field of ḥadīth he benefitted from accompanying Ibn Nāṣir, in Qur'ān and *Adab* [i.e. Manners] from Sibt al-Khiyāt and Ibn al-Jawāliqī. He was the last to narrate from al-Dinawari and al-Mutawakkili.[4]

His Students

Those who narrated from him include his son and companion, the great scholar Muḥyī al-Dīn Yūsuf who was a teacher in the institute of al-Mustaʿsim billāh, his oldest son ʿAlī al-Nāsikh, his

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[2] *Dhail al-Rauḍatain*, 21, *Thail ʿala Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/401, *Shatharāt al-Thahab*, 4/330.

[3] *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 13/29, *Said al-Khāṭir*, 238.

[4] *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 21/366, 367.

grandson, the preacher Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Farghalī al-Hanafī the author of *Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Mirror of Time), al-Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī, Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma, Ibn al-Dubaythī, Ibn al-Nājjar and al-Diyā.[5]

His Children

His grandson Abū al-Muẓfir and majority of those who wrote his biography say that he had three sons:

1. The oldest of them, Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz: He became a jurist in the school of Aḥmad and took knowledge from Abū al-Waqt, Ibn Nāṣir, al-Armawī and a group of his father's teachers. He traveled to the city of al-Musul where he preached and held sermons there for which he earned the people full acceptance. It is said that the family of al-Zahrazurī used to be jealous of him so they made someone put poison in his drink which caused him to die in al-Mūsul in 554 A.H. during the lifetime of his father.[6]
2. Abū al-Qāsim Badr al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Nāsikh*
3. Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf Muḥyī al-Dīn[7]: He was the most intelligent and youngest son as he was born in 580 A.H. He

[5] *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 21, 367.

[6] *Thail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/430, 431.

* Publishers note: For a detail biography of him please refer to, *'The Sincere Council to the Seekers of Sacred Knowledge'*, by Ibn Jawzī, published by Dār as-Sunnah, Birmingham, UK, 2011.

[7] cf. *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 23/372, *al-ʿIbar*, 5/237, *Dūwal al-Islām*, 2/122, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 13/203, *Thail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 2/258-261, *al-ʿUsjud al-Masbūk*, 635, *Shatharāt al-Thahab*, 5/286287, Ibn Shaṭṭī: *Mukhtasar Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, p.57.

became involved in preaching and held sermons after his father, in which he excelled and by which he was looked up to by his confreres. He then was appointed to control and supervise markets of Baghdād, and after that he was assigned to deliver the messages of the caliphs to kings of other different regions peculiarly to the Ayyūbī family in the Shām region. He held the position of teacher in the institute of caliph al-Mustā'sim in 640 A.H. till he was killed in prison in 656 A.H. by Hulaku who occupied Baghdād and destroyed it. His three sons Jāmal al-Dīn, Sharaf al-Dīn and Tāj al-Dīn were killed with him. He has authored many works, including *Mā'adin al-Abrīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Azīz* and *al-Madhab al-Aḥmad fī Madhab Aḥmad.* Unlike his brother Abu al-Qāsim, he was a dutiful son who honored his father and treated him well.

His grandson mentioned that Ibn al-Jawzī had many daughters; Rabi'a, Sharaf al-Nisā', Zainab, Jauhara, Sitt al-'Ulama al-Sughra and Sitt al-'Ulama al-Kubrā.[8]

His Uniqueness as a Preacher

Excellent indeed are the words of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī about him: 'He was the leading figure in reminding the people and had no equal. He would recite pleasant poetry and eloquent prose spontaneously and his fine words and moving speech was abundant. There has never been anyone like him, not before him and not after him. He is the carrier of the flag of exhortation in its various forms. He had a pleasant appearance and a good voice and his talks had an impact on peoples' hearts. His lifestyle in general was beautiful.'[9] He also said: 'I believe there will not be another

[8] *Mir'āt al-Zamān*, 8/503, Abū Shamma: *Thail al-Rauḍatain*, 26.

one like him.'[10]

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab said: 'So we conclude that his gatherings of exhortation were one of a kind and nobody had heard of anything like them. They were gatherings of great benefit where the heedless would be reminded, the ignorant would come to know, the sinners would repent and the polytheists would become Muslims.'[11]

His Works and Effects

Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said in *al-Ajwiba al-Miṣrīyyah*: 'Shaikh Abū'l-Faraj excelled in many sciences and has many writings to his account. He would write on many topics, and as I counted his works I found them to be over one thousand in number. Afterwards, I found out about other works as well.'[12]

Having mentioned some of his books, al-Dhahabī said: 'I don't know of a scholar who has written what this man has.'[13]

The virtuous teacher ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-ʿAlūjī has written a book on his works which was printed in Baghdād in 1965. In this piece he researched their titles, their copies and copies that had been printed and put them in alphabetic order. Whoever wishes to know

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[9] *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 21/367.

[10] *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 21/384.

[11] *Dhail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/410.

[12] *Dhail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/415, *al-Tāj al-Mukallal*, 70.

[13] *Tathkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 1344.

about these books should refer to this work, keeping in mind that many of the manuscripts mentioned therein by al-'Alūjī have now been printed.

He authored approximately 300 books, some of his printed works include:

- *Talqīh Fuhūm Ahli al-Athār fi Mukhtasarī al-Siyarī wal Akhbār.*[14] [Only a portion has been printed]
- *Al-Athkiyā' wa Akhbarahum.*[15] [Printed]
- *Manāqib 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz.*[16] [Printed]
- *Rawhu al-Arwāh.*[17] [Printed]
- *Shudhūr al-'Uqūd fi Tarikh al-'Uhūd.*[18] [Manuscript]
- *Zād al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsīr.*[19] [Printed]
- *Al-Muntadham fi Tārikh al-Mulūk wal Umam.*[20] [Only 6 volumes have been printed]
- *Al-Dhahab al-Masbūk fi Siyaril Mulūk.*[21] [Manuscript]
- *Al-Hamqa wal Mughaffalīn.*[22] [Printed]
- *Al-Wafa fi Fada'ili al-Mustafa.*[23] [Printed]

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[14] The book mentions the historical reports concerning the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions.

[15] A literature book in which he includes stories of intellectual people..

[16] The book details the virtues of the Caliph, 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz.

[17] The book explains the concept of spirit and spirituality

[18] An abridged version of the known history book *Tarikh al-Mulūk wal Umam.*

[19] The book explains the science of *Tafsīr.*

[20] The book mentions the history of nations and kings.

[21] The book focuses on leaders and kings throughout history.

[22] A literature book in which he reports the stories of idiots and fools.

- *Manaqib 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.*[24] [Printed]
- *Manaqib Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.*[25] [Printed]
- *Gharīb al-ḥadīth.*[26] [Printed]
- *Al-Tahqīq.*[27] [Only the first volume has been printed]

And also a considerable number of works in other fields of knowledge.

His Death

Ibn al-Jawzī passed away on Friday the 12th of Ramaḍān in 597 A.H and was buried next to the grave of Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal in the cemetery of Bāb Ḥarb.[28]

[23] The book relates the virtues of the Prophet (ﷺ).

[24] The book relates the virtues of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.

[25] The book relates the virtues of Imam Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

[26] The book explains one major aspect of the science of ḥadīth i.e. the ghareeb ḥad"th.

[27] The book examines the authenticity of narrations used in the known book *'al-Ta'liq al-kabir'* of al-Qadi Abū Ya'la, and how classification of ḥadīth effected scholars views.

[28] For a more detailed biography of al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Jawzī, refer to: Ibn Athir's *al-Kamil*, 12/71, Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī: *Mir'āt al-Zamān*, 8/481, al-Mundhirī: *al-Takmila*, Biography 608, al-Bāgghal: *al-Mashyakha*, 140, Abū Shāmma: *Thail al-Rauḍatain*, 21, Ibn al-Sā'ī: *al-Jāmi'*, 9/65, Ibn Khalkān: *al-Wafayāt*, 3/140, al-Dhahabī: *al-'Ibar*, 4/297, *Dūwal al-Islām*, 2/79, *Tathkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 4/1342, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21/365, Ibn Kathīr: *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 13/26, Ibn Rajab: *Thail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/399, al-Jazari: *Ghāyat wa'l-Nihāyah*, 1/375, Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khan: *al-Tāj al-Mukallal*, 70, Ibn Shaṭṭī: *Mukhtasar Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, p. 42.

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allāh, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

All praise be to Allāh, who deserves every glorification. He has reserved these praises solely for Himself and made it mandatory upon His creation to praise Him by. He is the absolute first (*al-Awwal*) without a beginning and the absolute last (*al-Akhir*) without an ending. There is none like unto Him, the All-Hearing (*al-Sami'*) and All-Seeing (*al-Baṣīr*). I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship save Allāh, the Absolute, who has no partners; and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His slave and Messenger. He sent him with guidance (*hudā*) and the true religion (*dīn*) so that it is made superior over all other religions, even though the polytheists may hate it.

I have chosen—may Allāh preserve your loftiness and support—the topic you have touched upon and have shown interest in compiling from various matters into the book with regards to the mannerisms of Al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī—Allāh have mercy on him—his asceticism (*zuhd*) and his wise counsel and exhortations. I have complied with your request that what was easy to compile. I have done so to the best of my ability, keeping

in mind the objectives set out by you. I seek help with Allāh; sufficient is He for me and the best of Trustees.

I have categorised my compilation on Al-Ḥasan into eight chapters [with some sub-sections]:

1. His upbringing and the description (*ṣifāt*) of his life and deeds
2. Mention of his manners (*adab*) and noble character (*makārim al-akhlāq*)
3. Words of wisdom (*ḥikm*) and advice (*mawāʿiẓ*) summarised with special attention to its eloquence (*jiha al-balagha*) and terseness (*ījāz*)
4. Dispraise of this world (*dham al-dunyā*) and his refusal to attach himself to it
5. Words of wisdom and advice that he uttered while reciting (*tilāwa*) the Qur'ān
6. What has been reported of his seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*), supplication (*duʿā'*) and his aversion to ostentation (*riyā'*) in deeds
7. His written correspondence with the caliphs (*khulafā'*) and his status in the eye of rulers (*umrā'*)
8. The remainder of his words of wisdom and advice

CHAPTER ONE

His Upbringing and the Description of his Life and Deeds

HIS NAME WAS [Abū Sa'īd] Al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī.[1] His father was a servant to man from al-Anṣār, while his mother was a servant of Umm Salamah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*), the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). He grew up in Umm Salamah's (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*) quarters. He was breast-fed by her as she loved him very much. He thus, received blessings that came within the Prophetic household (*barakah al-nubuwa*). He grew up speaking words of wisdom and was known for righteousness at an early age. He was a God-fearing person (*aḥad al-mutaqīn*) and a trustworthy friend of Allāh (*min awliyā' Allāh al-ṣiddiqīn*).

It has been reported that 'A'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*), heard Al-Ḥasan speaking and remarked: 'Who is it that speaks the words of the trustworthy people?'

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[1] For more details of his biography, see *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/563, *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, 7/156 and *al-Zuhd* of Imam Aḥmad, p.258.

It was mentioned to ʿAlī Ibn Ḥusayn[2] (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhumā*) that Al-Ḥasan said: 'It is not surprising to know how a person has died, rather, it is wondrous to know if a person was saved after his death.' ʿAlī replied: 'Glory be to Allāh, these are the words of a trustworthy (*ṣiddīq*).'

It was narrated from Al-Aʿmash that he used to say: 'Al-Ḥasan used to ponder[3] on words of wisdom which he eventually articulated.'

Another person heard him advising someone and commented, 'To Allāh is his restitution. He is eloquent (*faṣīh*), using the right phrases when advising.'

Al-Ḥasan used to be in a state of sadness (*ḥuzn*) often and would weep a lot. He used to worry about the rights due upon him. He was never unclean, even though he lived in the rural areas. He would always dress neatly and wear nice clothing. He used to partake in the festivities of people and did not delay in inviting people to share food with him. He had a particular kind of mannerism that people who never met him could identify him by.

It was narrated that a man entered Baṣrah and he had not met Al-Ḥasan. He asked someone local about Al-Ḥasan. The man replied: 'Go into the *masjid*—may Allāh forgive you—if you see a man whom you have never seen the likes of, then know that he is Al-Ḥasan.'

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[2] He was ʿAlī Ibn Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, known as Zaynu'l ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh be pleased with him). He was born in the year 38H. He was a highly trustworthy narrator of many hadīth. He died in the year 94H.

[3] See: *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, 6/58 and *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubulā'*, 4/584.

A Bedouin came to Baṣrah and asked: 'Who is the noblest man of this city?' The local people replied: 'Al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Al-Ḥasan.' He asked: 'Why is he nobler than the rest?' They replied: 'He has no need of what is in the hands of the people of this material world but the people are in need of the religious affairs that he has.' The Bedouin then said: 'May his restitution be with Allāh. This is how a true noble man should be.'

It was said that two priests passed by Al-Ḥasan and one of them said to the other: 'Lets slow down to observe this man who has the features of Christ (*al-Masīḥ*) so that we can find out more about him.' When they came near him, they heard him say: 'O how wondrous is this nation that has been commanded to seek provision. Their departure (from the world) is called out, yet the first of them cling on to the last of them while they know they are to be returned to their Lord. Thereafter they wander blindly in the throes of death.' He then cried till his beard became wet. The two priests said: 'What we have heard from this man is sufficient for us.' They then departed.

If the people of Baṣrah were asked regarding the most knowledgeable man among them or the most righteous, the most ascetic or the most handsome, they would start by mentioning Al-Ḥasan first followed by others. If Baṣrah was mentioned people would say: 'Its elder (*shaikh*) is Al-Ḥasan and its youth is Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh Al-Muzanī.'[4]

'Abdu'l-Wāḥid Ibn Zayd said: 'If you saw Al-Ḥasan, you would

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[4] Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr, Abū 'Abdullāh Al-Muzanī Al-Baṣrī, a scholar mentioned in the same breath as Al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sirīn. He died in 106AH or 108AH. The latter is correct according to Al-Dhahabī. See: *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/532

say 'this man has been endowed with much good manners due to his prolonged weeping.'

It was asked regarding him, 'Describe Al-Ḥasan to us?' It was said: 'May Allāh have mercy on Abū Sa'īd!—By Allāh—He arrives like he has just buried his intimate friend (*ḥamīm*) and when he returns, he returns as if Hellfire (*al-nār*) was above his head. If he sits, he sits like a prisoner who is about to be beheaded. When he wakes up in the morning, he seems as if he just came from the Hereafter (*al-Ākhirah*). When he goes to bed at night, he seems emaciated by sickness.'

Yunus Ibn 'Abdullāh said: I have never seen Al-Ḥasan laugh heartily.'

It was said that Muḥammad Ibn Wasi' sat with Thābit Ibn Muḥammad Al-Bunanī and he saw Thabit laughing and joking. He then said: 'May Allāh forgive you! Indeed, you joke in your gathering whereas we used to sit in the gathering of Al-Ḥasan who would arrive in our presence as if he came from the Hereafter and would discuss with us regarding the affairs of the Hereafter.'

Thābit said: 'May Allāh shower His mercy on Al-Ḥasan. He was a truthful and hardworking man. How can we compare ourselves with him? Our comparison to him is like that mentioned by Al-Awwal, [he then proceeded to recite the poem].

Al-Ḥasan used to seclude himself from the people for a day. A man once visited him and said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! May Allāh rectify you. Indeed we thought that some evil had afflicted you." Al-Ḥasan replied: 'O son of my brother! None attributes evil to Allāh except the foolish."

Ḥumayd—the servant of Al-Ḥasan—said: 'Al-Sha'bī told me one day, 'Inform me when Al-Ḥasan is by himself so that I can meet him personally.' I informed Al-Ḥasan of this and he said: 'Let him come if he wishes.' Al-Ḥasan secluded himself one day and I informed Al-Sha'bī of this so he rushed to meet Al-Ḥasan. We reached Al-Ḥasan's house and found him facing the *qiblah* and he was saying, 'O son of Adam! Even before you were created, you asked and it was given. You were asked but you were miserly. By Allāh! What misfortune? Woe to you for what you committed!' We greeted him and waited for some time as he did not look at us and was oblivious of our presence. Sha'bī said: 'By Allāh, this man is in another realm than the realm we are in.' We then left not having the opportunity to meet Al-Ḥasan.'

Al-Ḥasan was asked one day, 'How was your morning O Abū Sa'īd?' He replied: 'By Allāh, the calamity afflicting me is worse than a ship wreck in deep sea.' He was asked: 'Why is that so?' He replied: 'Verily of my sins I am sure, and of my obedience to Allāh and of my good deeds am frightened whether it will be accepted from me or rejected or even thrown back at my face.' 'How can a person say such things as you say O Abū Sa'īd?' He replied: 'Why should I not say such things? What surety do I have that Allāh, may He be glorified, will not see me while I am in a state of defect and he condemns me thereby, closing the door of repentance for me, being barred from His forgiveness all the while being unaware of it.'

Another man asked him: 'How are you O Abū Sa'īd?' He replied: 'I am in a bad state.' The man asked: 'Why is that so?' Al-Ḥasan replied: 'I am a man who faces (the approach of) death in the morning and at night while I am unaware in what condition I will die.'

A man came to meet Al-Ḥasan as he was weeping. He asked: 'Why are you crying? May Allāh rectify you.' He replied: 'By Allāh, I fear that the Owner of Hellfire will put me in it and not consider me again.'

He was asked about man's disaster. He replied: 'It is the time when people are driven to Hellfire and what an evil abode that is. We seek protection in Allāh from Hellfire and deeds that lead to Hellfire.'

In one of Al-Ḥasan's gatherings, Hell was mentioned. He said: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There will be a man who will be taken out of Hell tomorrow after having spent years in it."[5] Al-Ḥasan then added, 'I wish I was that man.'

He used to say: 'He who believes in the Hellfire will feel constricted while on earth as he is afraid of it. He who believes in the Hellfire will have it manifest in his flesh and blood.'

It was mentioned to Abū Sulaymān al-Daranī:[6] 'Indeed Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'He who wants to have fear in his heart and increase his tears, let him eat to half of his stomach.' Abū Sulayman said: 'May Allāh be merciful to you O Abū Sa'īd! He used to belong to a group of people who would have introspection. They would account for their actions before the Day of Account (*yawm al-Ḥisāb*). I hope he will be among those who are victorious, may Allāh have mercy on him.'

A man who frequented the *Majid al-Ḥarām* said: 'I did not like

[5] Bukhārī, 11/416 on the authority of Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

[6] He was 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Aḥmad Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, a well-known ascetic from Damascus. He died in the year 215AH

to sit in a gathering where they did not narrate from Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, may Allāh be pleased with him.'

Al-Ḥasan was asked one day: 'O Abū Sa'īd, what brings sadness to the heart (*ḥuzn al-qalb*)?' He replied: 'Hunger (*jū'*).' He was asked: 'What removes sadness from the heart?' He replied: 'Having a full stomach.'

He used to say: 'Repent to Allāh from excessive sleep (*nawm*) and consuming excessive food (*ṭa'ām*).'

He used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'He who deliberately goes hungry will receive more reward that Day than any other person, except he who brings a similar deed." Al-Ḥasan was referring to voluntary fasting for the sake of Allāh.

Mālik Ibn Dinār[7] said: 'I met Al-Ḥasan one day while he was eating. He asked me to join him. I replied that I had already eaten. He replied: 'If you did eat (with me), it would make be happy.' I replied that I was full. He then said: 'May Allāh be glorified, I did not realise that a believer could eat to an extent he was full such that he could not help his brother (by joining in his meal).'

It was said: 'Al-Ḥasan attended a wedding feast where a known ascetic was also present. When the sweets were brought, the ascetic man raised his hand in pompous pretension (to show disdain for sweets). Al-Ḥasan however, ate it saying to himself, 'Eat O fool! Verily Allāh's blessing upon you in the provision of cold water

[7] He was Mālik Ibn Dinār Al-Baṣrī, a scholar who is considered one of the trusted Tābi'īn. He was born during the Abbasid caliphate. He used to author books on topics related to heart softening (*al-raqa'iq*). He died just before the plague outbreak. The outbreak happened in the year 131AH.

weighs more that His blessings upon you in these sweets.'

It was said that a man abstained from eating chicken meat. Al-Ḥasan said: '[Rather] abstain from eating what is unlawful (*ḥarām*) for you and eat if you wish, rather than what is lawful (*ḥalāl*) for you. Eschew showing-off (*riyā'*) and pretension (*tasanu'*), for verily Allāh Almighty debases those who do so.'

It was said that Al-Ḥasan met an old man during a funeral. When the burial was over he asked the old man: 'O elderly one! I ask you in the Name of your Creator, do you think that the deceased would yearn to be returned to this world again so that it can enact more righteous deeds and forgiveness for his sins?' The old man replied: 'Yes by Allāh!' Al-Ḥasan replied: 'Why are not we all thinking like this deceased person?' The old man then departed saying: 'O what a great advice for those who are living. Yet when the call (of death) is summoned, there is no life.'

A man was once on his way to the masjid at night through a muddy path and he met Al-Ḥasan. The man asked: 'Does one go out on a night like this O Abū Sa'īd?' He replied: 'O son of my brother! This is either perseverance or destruction.'

Al-Ḥasan was a person who was regular in his night prayers. He used to say: 'I do not know of an act of worship more difficult to perform than the prayer at the wee hours of the night. Verily it is an act of the pious (*muttaqīn*).

He used to say: 'The night prayer is obligatory upon the Muslims, even if it is only like the amount of milk in the udder of the sheep or that which is in the udder of the camel in between two suckling.'

He used to say: 'If you are unable to perform night prayers nor fast in the day, then know that you are a person who is deprived and your sins have overwhelmed you.'

He used to say: 'Sleep has deprived one of piety. He who fears that he will miss performing it will set out at night (to stay awake).'

A man told Al-Ḥasan: 'O Abū Saʿīd! I am unable to perform the night prayers.' He replied: 'O son of my brother! Seek forgiveness from Allāh and repent to Him. For indeed what you told me is an indication of evil.'

He used to say: 'A man would sin and as a result, he is unable to perform the night prayers.'

Al-Ḥasan tried to pray night prayers one night but he was able to find solace in it, so he sat through the whole night without sleeping. He was asked about it and replied: 'I was overwhelmed by my soul into leaving my prayer, so I overwhelmed it to leaving sleep and I shall pursue this method until I overpower my soul and find solace in prayer.'

He used to say: 'Verily the soul commands to do evil. If it rebels against righteous deeds, then you must rebel against evil deeds.'

It was said to ʿAbdu'l-Wāḥid, a friend of Al-Ḥasan: 'What superiority does Al-Ḥasan have over all of you (his friends) while among you are scholars and jurists?' He replied: 'If you wish, I shall inform you first or second of the many things.' The man said: 'Tell me the second.' ʿAbdu'l-Wāḥid replied: 'If he commands people to do a thing, he himself will excel most in it and if he forbids people to do a thing, he himself will be the furthest removed from it." The

man then asked: 'Tell me the first.' He replied: 'I have not seen a man who refrains from his bed as much as Al-Ḥasan.'

Al-Ḥasan was asked about something he had mentioned. They said: 'We have not heard any other jurist mention this.' He responded: 'Have you ever seen a jurist (*faqīh*)? A jurist is an ascetic of this world and yearns for the Hereafter. He is tireless in performing acts of worship. If it is accepted, he praises Allāh and if it is rejected, he praises Allāh too.'

It was said that a man proposed to Al-Ḥasan for his daughter's hand in marriage. He was prepared to pay one hundred thousand dirham as the bridal gift. The brides' mother told Al-Ḥasan: 'Marry her to this man as he is keen to marry our daughter and has offered a good sum as bridal gift.' He replied: 'A man becomes tempted to give away his daughter to an ignorant person. Marriage to such a person is assuredly not desirable.' He rejected the proposal and married his daughter off to a pious man instead.

A man was in discussion with Al-Ḥasan. He asked: 'O Abū Saʿīd! I have a daughter who I love very much. A man of worldly means has proposed marriage to her. Who do you think is best for her to marry?' He replied: 'Marry her to a person who fears Allāh. When he loves her, he will treat her with respect and if he dislikes her, he will not transgress upon her.'

Ḥumayd—the servant of Al-Ḥasan—said: 'We visited Al-Ḥasan during times when he was ill.' He said: 'Welcome. May Allāh keep you all alive and well and may he beautify our worldly life.' We asked: 'Advise us, may Allāh be pleased with you. Indeed, we want to benefit from the advice you give.' He replied: 'O brothers! This worldly life is only good if you believe, have patience and are God-

fearing.' It is not piety for you to hear something in one ear and let it out through the other ear. Those who saw the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was alive, did not put a burnt brick over another nor a reed over a reed (i.e. build anything); what they built was the knowledge of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his guidance; glad tidings to those who follow his path and are quick to imitate his lifestyle. Then take heed, take heed. Why do you rejoice and not feel sad instead?'

Abu 'Abdu'l-Raḥman said: 'We visited Al-Ḥasan when he was sick. He asked for a scribe to join them so that he could write his will. He then said: 'Write, in the Name of Allāh, the most beneficent, the especially merciful. To proceed: Al-Ḥasan is indeed the servant of Allāh and the son of the servant of Allāh. He bears witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, the absolute and He has no partners. He bears witness the Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger. He who meets Allāh with this declaration said sincerely from his heart and tongue, Allāh will let him enter Paradise.'

He continued: 'I heard Mu'ad narrate it and he gave this advice to his family. Mu'ad then said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allāh say this and he gave this advice to his family.'

It was said that when Al-Ḥasan was in the throes of death, he became very worried. His son told him: 'We are terrified by your worrying O father!' He replied: 'O son! The truth has come and falsehood is defeated. I am facing a calamity that I have never met before.'

Mālik Ibn Dinār said: 'I saw Al-Ḥasan in my dream after his death. He was happy and he was glowing white and his tears shone

when they flowed. I asked: 'Are you not dead?' He replied in the affirmative. I added: 'What have you attained after death for indeed you spent much time in sadness on earth.' He replied: 'Allāh has removed sadness from us and has guided to the abodes of the pious (*manāzil al-abrār*). He has made lawful for us the houses of the righteous (*masākin al-mutaqīn*). By Allāh! This is only because of Allāh's favour upon us.' I said: 'What do you command us to do O Abū Sa'īd?' He replied: 'I wish people would prolong their sadness in the worldly life such that they have happiness in the Hereafter.'

Ṣāliḥ Al-Muriyyu[8] said: 'I went to meet Al-Ḥasan one day and heard him reciting poetry thus:

He is not dead one who died in peace.
Rather, it is one who dies while still alive
Indeed, the dead is he who sees his grave.
While he is downcast and with little hope.

When he had finished his morning remembrance (*tasbīh*), he recited:

The world will not last for the living.
And the living will not last in the world

At night, he would cry and recite:

The young man will rejoice with the pious deeds he has sent forth.
Were he to know the ailment that will kill him

Ḥumayd said: 'We went to meet Al-Ḥasan one day while he

[8] He was an ascetic and an advisor in Baṣrah. He was weak in narrating ḥadīth. He died in the year 172AH

was crying and reciting: 'O Lord! When shall I be grateful for the blessing that You have recently blessed me with and the help you keep sending me? What a bad bargain it is for he who digresses from Your door and a veil is placed upon him.' Al-Ḥasan then recited:

If I am not grateful for my strength and capability
Then whatever is in my heart is not love for You
I am not safe from illness even for an hour
And my eyes do not see the rising sun

He then sought forgiveness from Allāh and cried, saying: 'A heart that loves Allāh loves hard-work, for strain has an effect on it. Paradise is not attained by those who prefer relaxation...'

A man asked him once: 'O Abū Sa'īd! Why is it that those who perform the night prayer have beautiful faces?' He replied: 'It is because they isolate themselves with the Most Merciful (*khalwā bi'l-Raḥmān*), so He dresses them in His radiance (*nūr*) and it appears upon their faces.

He was asked: 'O Abū Sa'īd! What do you say of a man who sins and then repents and then sins again and then repents?' He replied: 'I do not consider that except as a characteristic of a believer (*akhlāq al-mu'minin*).'

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were mentioned in Al-Ḥasan's presence and he said: 'May Allāh sanctify their souls. They strived while we cowered; they gained knowledge while we remained ignorant. Whatever they agreed upon, we follow and whatever they differed in, we refrained from.'

He used to say: 'Sweeping the *masājid* and maintaining them

through remembrance (*dhikr*) is the currency for (being granted) the *ḥūr al-ʿayn.*'

He used to say: 'One has attained truth when he realises that death is his return and that the Day of Judgement is an appointed time and standing in the presence of the Almighty is witnessed; and the longer he stays in this world the more painful it is, so he yearns to do righteous deeds.'

Al-Ḥasan was informed that a man was back-biting him. He sent him a platter of dates with the message: 'You have gifted me your good deeds by back-biting me, so I have recompensed that with this platter.' The man was embarrassed and never again back-bit Al-Ḥasan again.

If Al-Ḥasan saw a brave man who was not preoccupied with matters of religion, he would recite:

You wish to be the best among your people
While they have provisions and you do not have provisions

He used to say: 'O son of Adam! Your day is your guest, so be kind to it for if you do so, it will depart with your gratitude (*ḥamd*). If you are unkind to it, it will depart with your censure (*damm*). Such is the case with your night too.'

He used to say: 'Your fear (*kawf*) for safety is better than safety followed by imminent fear.'

He used to say: 'I have not known a thing we are so certain about, which is treated with doubt than our death, and our deeds that contradict it.'

He used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is no better charity than the charity of the tongue.' He was asked: 'O the Messenger of Allāh! What is charity of the tongue?' He replied: 'A good petition (*al-shifā'ah al-Ḥasanah*) by which Allāh diminishes censure (*dhamīm*), what fulfils one's needs and removes difficulties (*kurba*).'

CHAPTER TWO

His Manners and Noble Character

IT WAS NARRATED from Al-Ḥasan—may Allāh have mercy on him—that he used to say: 'Fulfilling the need of a Muslim brother is more beloved to me than making *i'tikāf*[9] in the *masjid* for a month.'

A man asked Al-Ḥasan about good manners (*ḥusn al-khuluq*). He replied (it is): 'Sacrifice (*badhl*), forgiveness (*'afū*) and forbearance (*iḥtimāl*).'

He used to say: 'The sign of manhood (*muru'i al-rajul*) is being true in speech (*ṣidq lisān*), bearing the pains of one's brothers, fulfilling the rights of people around him and preventing harm from his neighbour.'

He used to say: 'If Allāh—the Most High—willed, He would have made you all wealthy and there would not be a poor man

[9] Spending periods of isolation in the masjid for purpose of worship and contemplative

amongst you. If He Willed, He would have made you all poor and there would not be a rich man amongst you. He has made this disparity in order to test some of you with others to see what actions you do.' He then mentioned good manners by citing the verse:

وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ
وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

> "And find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul—it is those who will be the successful."[10]

Ḥe said: 'The sign of a noble person is that he is swift in performing deeds, while the sign of a loser is delaying and postponing.'

He used to say: 'He has not treated you justly one who has brought you dishonour, and one who keeps his wealth away from you.'

He said: 'We used to consider a person a miser (*bakhīl*), if he were to lend his friend even a single *dirham*, although we used to share everything [with no strings attached]. By Allāh! I have had the acquaintance of a man who would tear his waist cloth into half and give it to his friend; keeping only the other half for himself. There was a man before your time that used to fast. He would go to his friends and say: 'I am fasting today for the sake of Allāh and I want Allāh to accept it while you all have a share of the rewards. Hence give me some food from your food. Some of them would hurriedly bring him water and dates in the hope

[10] *Al-Ḥashr* (59): 9

that they share the rewards of fasting of this man. The one who is rich will bring forth what he has.'

He used to say: 'I have witnessed a community that would support a friend's wife and children for forty years after his death.'

He used to say: 'If a man enters his friend's house, it is not an issue if he was to eat whatever food or fruits he finds without his friend's permission.'

He used to say: 'There is not a thing that a person expends except that he is accountable for it, except spending on one's parents and others besides them—or spending on his brother for the sake of Allāh and spending on his pious friend. It is narrated that Allāh Almighty, is shy to hold him accountable for these expenditures.'

He used to say: 'It is not from manliness to profit as a result of his friend's work.'

He used to say: 'Be careful of one who narrates to you what another has said. Indeed, he will narrate to others what you say.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Your deeds are a witness for you, so be wary as to how they reach your Lord.'

He used to say: 'The people who do good are known by these signs: being truthful in speech (*ṣidq al-hadīth*); fulfilling promises (*idā' al-amanah*) and keeping trusts when entrusted (*wafā' bi'l-'ahd*); simplicity and eschewing pomposity (*qila al-fakr wa'l-khuyāl*) and maintaining ties of kinship (*ṣilah al-raḥm*). They are kind to the downtrodden (*raḥma al-du'afa*); they have good manners (*ḥusn al-khuluq*) and are very caring (*sa'a al-ḥilm*). They propagate knowledge

(*bath al-ʿilm*) and do not pursue women.'

He used to say: 'Son of Ādam! Refrain from the prohibitions of Allāh by being a true servant (*ʿabd*), and be grateful for the provision that has been portioned for you by Allāh. Only then shall you be rich. Be good to your neighbour and love for the people what you love for yourself. Only then shall you be a just person. Reduce your laughter for it kills the heart just like the body dies.'

He used to say: 'O people! You will not attain that which you love until you refrain from that which you desire. You will not attain that which you hope for except with patience (*ṣabr*) upon that which you hate.'

He used to say: 'Patience (*ṣabr*) is a treasure from among the treasures of Paradise (*kunuz al-jannah*). Verily, man attains all goodness when he observes patience at the right time.'

He used to say: 'Whoever has been conferred with contentment (*riḍāʾ*) will be satisfied with his provision. He who is satisfied with his provision is patient when afflicted with a calamity.'

It was said that a man was cursing another in the presence of Al-Ḥasan. The man who was cursed stood up wiping perspiration off his face and recited:

وَلَمَن صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

> "And whoever is patient and forgives—indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination."[11]

Al-Ḥasan remarked: 'Verily his response encompassed it (deter-

mination) while the ignorant lost it.'

Al-Ḥasan said: 'O son of Ādam! Be patient or be destroyed.'

He said: 'It was reported that a man cursed Abū Dharr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) so he said: 'Between me and Paradise is (the covenant of) 'Aqabah. If I am rewarded for it, then I am better than what you blame me for and if I am unworthy and thrown in Hell, then I am more cursed than what you have mentioned. Desist O man! For indeed you are going to meet the One who knows what deceives the eyes and what the breasts conceal.'

It was said that a man cursed another. The other replied: 'If not that Allāh, the Most High, is listening to us I would have retorted.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'Patience (*ṣabr*) is of two types: patience when afflicted with a calamity and patience in refraining from sins. He, who has both, is the best of those who are patient.'

He used to say: 'There is no potion better in the eye of Allāh, the Most High, than the potion of calamity which leads a man to contemplate goodness and be patient; or the potion of anger (*ghaẓ*) which is tempered with forgiveness (*'afū*) and humility (*ḥilm*).'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You can never embody faith (*īmān*) and treachery (*khiyāna*) in one soul. Then how is it that you can be a Muslim and yet be untrustworthy to your neighbour or you cannot spare people from your harm. Has it not been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "There is no faith (*īmān*) for

[11] *Al-Shurā* (42) :43

he who is not trustworthy and there is no religion for he who is not trusted."[12]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "He is not a Muslim whose neighbour fears his treachery."[13]

Al-Ḥasan then said: 'O son of Adam! You cannot encompass true faith until your shortcomings are made apparent. Therefore, rectify your shortcomings for verily you will not rectify one of it except that another is more in need of rectification.'

'O son of Adam! If you are to be just, then refrain from pointing out the shortcomings of the people. Surely the best of servant is he who does not do so.'

A man recited a poem to him one day:

> The boldest of man I have seen is he who hides
> The shortcomings of a man from the man himself.

He used to say: 'O son of Adam! How weak you are due to self-negligence (*ghaflah*). You point out peoples' shortcomings but are oblivious to your own. You see the speck in your brother's eye but are blind to the stem that is in your eye. How little introspection and what great prejudice!'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The people who enjoin righteousness in this world are

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[12] Imām Aḥmad, 1/135, 154, 210 and 251 and the ḥadīth is ḥasan.

[13] Bukhārī, 10/443 on the authority of Abū Shurayḥ (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

those who will be the people of righteousness (*ahlul-maʿrūf*) in the Hereafter."[14] Allāh Almighty has forgiven them their sins for enjoining righteousness in this world. He, the Most High, will say to them on the Day of Judgement: 'Disperse your rewards to those you wish for I have forgiven you your sins. They will disperse their rewards and they will be the people who enjoin righteousness in the Hereafter just as they would in this world."

He was asked: 'What manners are the best?' He replied: 'Goodness (*jūd*) and honesty (*ṣidq*).'

He used to say: 'I have met a group of people who never considered wealthy people dearer to them than a fellow Muslim. What then is wrong with you, that you crave after something you will be accountable for?'

He heard a man say to another: 'You owe me a *dāniq*.'[15] Al-Ḥasan replied: 'Do not be too trivial for Allāh will trivialise you. Allāh has cursed the one who asks for a *dāniq* and those who give it.'

He used to say: 'He who hoards foodstuff to increase its value, then kneads dough to make bread and feeds the poor with it, will not be spared of his sin nor be safe from it.'

He used to say: 'It is not a sign of good neighbourliness to [merely] spare the neighbour of harm. It is a sign of good neighbourliness to anticipate harm (that might afflict the neighbour

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[14] Ḥākim, 1//124 and Imām Aḥmad in his *al-Zuhd*, p487 and it is authenticated by al-Albānī. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ* #2030.

[15] An insignificant value coin, which was 1/6 the value of a *dinār* and *dirham*. See *Lisān ul-ʿArab*, 10/105.

[and to pre-empt it]).'

He used to say: 'Whoever has four of these qualities, Allāh will protect him from *Shayṭān* and forgive him, such that he will not enter Hellfire (*al-nār*): he who controls himself when there is fear (*rahbah*), love (*ragbah*), rage (*ḥidda*) or desire (*shahwa*).'

He used to say: 'Knowledge (*ʿilm*) is the best thing that can be betrothed and manners (*adab*) is the best of friends. *Taqwā* is the best of provisions and worship (*ʿibadah*) is the best of commodities. Intellect (*ʿaql*) is the best of delegations; good character (*ḥusn khuluq*) is the best of companion. Kindness (*ḥilm*) is the best of ministers; contentment (*qanāʿa*) is the best treasure. Guidance (*taufiq*) is the best ornament and the remembrance of death (*dhikr al-mawt*) is the best of advisors.'

He used to say: 'Do not be of those who encompass the knowledge of the scholars and the wisdom of the wise, yet treat truth like a fool.'

He used to say: 'Whoever has four of these qualities, Allāh will enter him into Paradise and bless him with mercy (*raḥma*): He who has filial piety towards his parents (*birr al-walaydain*), is kind to his subordinates, takes care of the orphan (*yatīm*) and helps the weak (*ḍaʿīf*).'

He used to say: 'Verily envy (*ḥasd*) eats up the religiosity of a person faster than the decay of the body."

He used to say: 'It was narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: 'Knowledge is of two types. Knowledge in the heart (*ʿilm fī'l-qalb*), which is the beneficial knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ*); and the knowledge on the tongue (*ʿilm ʿalā al-lisān*) and this shall be a

witness to Allāh against the son of Ādam."[16]

He used to say: 'A believer is smart. He is of those whose fear of Allāh increases as Allāh increases him in goodness (*iḥsān*).'

He used to say: 'A believer does good deeds and fears Allāh the most. Even if he were to give gold in the path of Allāh that fills the earth, he does not rest in peace until he sees the rewards. He will say: 'I am not saved, I am not saved', while the hypocrite will say: 'There are vast numbers of people. My sins as compared to their total sins are nothing. Allāh is the most Merciful. He shall forgive me.'

Then Al-Ḥasan said: 'O son of Ādam! You commit evil deeds (*sayyi'āt*) yet expect security from Allāh?'

He used to say: 'He who has bad manners has brought punishment upon himself. He who has much wealth has many sins, and he who talks a lot increases his chance of being toppled.'

He used to say: 'If not for knowledge (*'ilm*) people would have been like cattle."

It was narrated that Al-Ḥasan said: "Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to say: 'Verily greeting your Muslim brother with salutations when you meet him brings about good relationship between both of you, call him by the name most beloved to him and give him room in a gathering.'

[16] Al-Darimī, 1/102 with a mursal chain of narration and Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *al-Zuhd*, 13/235

Al-Ḥasan then said: 'Indeed the righteous predecessors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) have taught you manners (*adab*) and good character (*makārim al-ahklāq*), so learn it, may Allāh have mercy on you all.'

He used to say: 'What is wrong with us that when we meet a Muslim brother we do not ask after him nor supplicate for him thus: 'May Allāh forgive you and us and enter all of us into Paradise.' Yet this is not the case when it involves wealth. Woe upon you! Your predecessors were not like this; why have not you followed them while you were commanded to do so.'

He used to say: 'O people! What is wrong with us that we draw closer to wellness but when a calamity strikes us, we dispute. The Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) were not like this. We seek refuge in Allāh from differing from them.'

Al-Ḥasan saw a man who spoke a lot. He remarked, 'O son of my brother! Guard your tongue for indeed it has been said: 'Nothing is more worthy of incarceration than the tongue.'

It was narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: 'Are the people tossed into the Fire upon their faces, except because of what their tongues have wrought."[17]

He used to say: 'The tongue of the learned is behind his heart. If he intends to speak, he thinks first. If it is favourable, he speaks and if it is unfavourable, he keeps quiet. The heart of the ignorant is behind his tongue. Every time he intends to speak, he does so.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My *ummah* will not enter Paradise due to them having prayed

[17] Al-Tirmidhī, #2617, who graded it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ.

and fasted much but they will enter Paradise due to the Mercy of Allāh, a peaceful heart, generous soul and due to the mercy shown to fellow Muslims."[18]

He used to say: 'It was narrated that a caller will call on the Day of Judgement, saying: 'Let them stand those who have rewards with Allāh. None will stand except a man who had fulfilled the needs of his brother or forgave him for the evil he was subjected to, or who gave his brother from what he was blessed with.'

He used to say: 'The intelligent one will not earn the wrath of a single person by earning the love of a thousand men. If he does so, then he is in loss and is not considered a gain.'

He used to say: 'The dignity of a noble lies in his manners, and his *taqwā* is his esteem.'

He used to say: 'Whoever censures his brother for a wrongdoing and then repents to Allāh, will not face death until he is tested by a similar wrongdoing.'

Al-Rabīʿ Ibn Subayh asked him: 'O Abū Saʿīd! What do you say about the ten units of prayer after 'Ishā. Is it optional or Sunnah?' He replied: 'It is not Sunnah. If it was Sunnah, it is not appropriate for a Muslim to leave it. O son of my brother! From the manners of a Muslim is to be steadfast in the commands that have become habitual for him to practice throughout the year.'[19]

[18] Al-Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-Īmān*, 7/3493; Al-Dhahabi and Ibn Ḥajr al-Asqalanī said it was rejected (*munkar*).

[19] Allāh, the Most High, has commanded us to practice what has been revealed in *Sharīʿah* of worship and not add any innovation which has not been com-

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He used to say: 'It is mentioned in the *Tawrah*:[20] richness (*ghina*) lies in being content (*qanā'a*) and being safe (*salāma*) from the people. Wellness (*'afiyya*) lies in repelling desires (*rafd al-shahwa*), and victory (*najā*) lies in eschewing wants (*tark al-raghba*) and enjoying patience (*ṣabr*) throughout the year in a short life.'

He then said: 'Have manners—may Allāh bestow mercy upon you—with the manners enjoined by Allāh and preserve what has been revealed in the book of Allāh. This is so that you can be from the friends of Allāh.'

He used to say: 'A servant is not blessed with a blessing except that it has conditions attached to it. Except for the blessings showered upon Sulaymān Ibn Dāwūd (*'alayhum-salām*). Allāh Almighty said:

هَٰذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

> "[We said], 'This is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account.'"'[21]

He used to say: 'A servant does not extend his hopes except that his deeds worsen.'

He used to say: 'Verily you, O man, are merely a number. Not a day passes by except that a part of you diminishes.'

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manded nor done by the Prophet (ﷺ). The servant is commanded to do that which is prescribed. This is the crux of what Al-Ḥasan said. Meaning that we must practice what the Shari'ah has prescribed and not innovate contrary to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

[20] A previously revealed divine Book that was given to Prophet Mūsā (*'alayhis-salām*).

[21] *Ṣad* (38): 39

He used to say: 'May Allāh be merciful to Ibn Mas'ūd. It is as if he was referring to you when he said: 'the ascetic amongst you is the one who has wants. The fighter amongst you is the one who is weak and the learned amongst you is the ignorant.'

He used to say: "'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb used to say: 'Mix with people and dispute with them.' Al-Ḥasan added: 'Mix with people with good manners and dispute with them in acts of wrongdoing.'

He used to say: 'Four things are incumbent upon a Muslim for his brethren in Islām: assisting the generous people (to do good), accepting their invitation, seeking forgiveness for the wrongdoers and guiding those who are astray to the truth.'

He used to say: 'Whoever is able to satisfy his Muslim brother's (lawful) desire or fulfil his needs, then all his past sins are forgiven.'

He used to say: 'It was narrated that Allāh, the Most High, said to Ādam, peace be upon him: 'O Ādam! Rights are divided into four for you and your progeny that come after you: For Me, for you, between you and Me and between you and the people. As for that which is for Me, it is that you worship only Me and do not associate any partners with Me. As for that which is for you, it is that you are rewarded for the good deeds you do, and the more you are in need of them. As for that which is between you and Me, it is that you invoke Me (alone) and for Me to respond to you. As for that which is between you and the people, it is that you befriend them as much as you would like them to befriend you.'[22]

[22] A source reference for this narration was unable to be located.

He used to say: 'Understanding is a shield of knowledge (al-*fahm wi'ā'u al-'ilm*). Knowledge is a guide to action (*al-'ilm dalīl al-'aml*) and action leads to goodness (*al-'aml qā'ida al-khayr*). Desire is a station for sin (*al-hawā murkab al-ma'āsi*) and wealth is a disease for the deniers (*al-māl dā' al-munkarīn*). This world is the market place for the Hereafter (*al-dunyā ṣauq al-akhira*). Woe upon woe to those who gained the blessings of Allāh and committed sin.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Faith (*īmān*) is not gained by bestowal or wishful thinking (*tammani*). It is that which is etched into the heart (*qalb*) and corroborated by actions (*a'māl*).'

It was said: 'The demise of Al-Ḥasan was announced to Dāwūd al-Ṭa'ī who remarked, 'May Allāh forgive him. By Allāh, he was a blessed man whose worth is only known after he is no more.' Hubayb Ibn 'Aws heard this and said:

When calamities befall they upset
Though through them blessings are gained

It was said that a haughty man once invited Al-Ḥasan. He called out: 'O Abū Sa'īd!"[23] To this Al-Ḥasan replied: 'Learn all of you, may Allāh shower mercy on all of you. Knowledge is to the deen as medicine is to the body, and Arabic grammar is for strengthening the tongue."

He used to say: 'Whoever errs in reciting of the Qur'ān, has belied Allāh. Indeed Allāh, the Most High, said:

لَّا يَأْتِيهِ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ

[23] He made a grammatical error in calling him *'Yā Abū Sa'īd'* rather than *'Yā Abā Sa'īd'*.

> "Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it."[24]

Error in recital is one of the biggest falsehoods.

A man said to Al-Ḥasan: 'You, O Abū Sa'īd! Do not mispronounce in your recital.' He replied: 'O son of my brother! I have surpassed that.'

He was asked: 'What is manliness?' He replied: 'To not be selfish and be demeaning, and not to ask (for help) and be belittled.'

He used to say: 'A person attains completeness if he has four qualities. Even if a person has one of it, he is (still) the best among his people: his religion that guides him, his intellect that directs him, his sense of fulfilment that beautifies him and his modesty that protects him.'

He used to say: 'To whom else should a Muslim confide in, if not his Muslim brother? Who else will feel duty-bound as will a Muslim brother? Verily a Muslim is a mirror to his brother. He hides his shortcomings and forgives his sins. When a man from among the righteous predecessors met another, he would say to him: 'O brother! I do not see my own sins and do not realise my own shortcomings, so if you see goodness in me, command me (to do more of it) and if you see evil in me, forbid me from it. 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to say: 'May Allāh shower mercy upon this affair [of Islām] which has made us equals. One of us used to readily accept warnings from his brother and benefit from it."

[24] *Fuṣṣilāt* (41): 42

He used to say: 'A believer is a branch of a believer. He is saddened if his brother is sad, he becomes happy when his brother is happy.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'You gain from having a good companion (*khalīl*). Therefore, choose your brothers and friends and disregard any of their (insignificant) shortcomings.'

He used to say: 'Refrain from some affairs, for a person may eat food, enter a place and sit in a gathering yet he is not sincere in it. His religion leaves him while he is oblivious to all that.'

It was said to him: 'O Abū Saʿīd! Some people come to gatherings and pick out mistakes you make in your speech in order to defame you thereby. He replied: 'O son of my brother! Do not be bothered by it. I will be satisfied if I enter Paradise and be in the company of the Most Merciful (*mujāwara al-Raḥmān*) and the Prophets (*ʿalayhis-salām*). It does not bring satisfaction that I am protected from the people (and their speech).'

He used to say: 'He who seeks knowledge for the sake of Allāh, it will indeed be manifested in his awe (*khushūʿ*), his asceticism (*zuhd*) and his humility (*tawāḍaʿ*).'

He used to say: 'Be observant when the funeral bier arrives for there are three rewards in it: reward for sending condolences, reward for partaking in the funeral prayer and reward for following the bier. It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever follows the funeral bier until the burial, seventy of his great sins will be forgiven."'[25]

[25] A source reference for this narration was unable to be located. However, it was reported by Bukhārī and Muslim from the narration of Abū Hurayrah

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When Al-Nawār, the wife of Al-Farzadqī died, many people of Baṣrah attended her funeral. Al-Ḥasan attended it too. Al-Farzadqī approached Al-Ḥasan and asked: 'Do you know what the people are saying O Abū Sa'īd?' He asked: 'What are they saying?' Al-Farzadqī said: 'They say that the best of people and the worst of people have attended the funeral." Al-Ḥasan said: 'And whom do they mean by that?' He replied: 'They assume that you are the best of people and that I am the worst of people.' Al-Ḥasan then said: 'I am not the best and you are not the worst. However, what have you prepared for a day like this?' He replied: 'The declaration that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh since sixty years ago.' When Al-Nawār was buried, Al-Farzadqī recited:

I fear a bad consequence after burial if I am not forgiven
A grave most torched and tight
If a harsh guide were to lead me on the Day of Judgement
And a rider will ride with Al-Farzadqī
Indeed, the sons of Ādam are a failure
Those who walked towards Hellfire bound by chains

Al-Ḥasan cried until he was sobbing. He then said: 'Verily poetry has wisdom in it.'[26] He added: 'May Allāh have mercy on you O Abū Farās! Continue as you have done today if you have good acumen. You are sending it forth to the Magnanimous (*Jawād*) and Most Just (*'Adl*). They then parted ways. Al-Farzadqī died and Al-

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(*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever follows the funeral procession and offers the funeral prayer for it, will get a reward equal to one qirat, and whoever attends it till burial, will get a reward equal to two *qirat*." It was asked: 'What are two *qirat*?" He (ﷺ) replied: "Equal to two huge mountains."'

[26] A Prophetic narration reported by Bukhārī, 10/537, on authority of 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

Ḥasan dreamt about him and he was saying: 'I have been shown mercy with that day I spent with Al-Ḥasan.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'O people! Eschew procrastination (*taṣwīf*). For indeed I have heard some pious people say: 'We do not want to die until we repent. And we do not repent until we die.'

He used to say: 'There are twelve qualities in food: four are obligatory (*farīḍah*), four are *sunnah* and four are from manners (*adab*).

As for the obligatory qualities, they are: saying *bismillāh*, liking the food, being satisfied with what one is served and being grateful for the blessings.

As for the *Sunnah* qualities, they are: sitting leaning on the right leg, eating what is closest to him on the plate, eating with three fingers of the right hand and licking the hands after eating.

As for the qualities that are based on manners, they are: washing the hand before and after eating, taking small portions to eat, chewing the food and to refrain from looking at the face of others who are also eating.'

It was said that Al-Ḥasan was sitting in a gathering one day and an extraordinary woman came to him and asked: 'O Abū Saʿīd! Is it permissible for a man to marry four wives? He replied in the affirmative to which she said: 'Is it also permissible for a woman to marry four husbands?' He replied: 'No.' She then said: 'Verily, Allāh, the Most High, has made it lawful for the men and unlawful for the women. Do not give religious ruling of this nature to the husbands of women.' She then left. Al-Ḥasan watched her as she left and said: 'I have not seen a woman like her.' It was reported that Al-Ḥasan never showed interest in a worldly thing before

seeing her or afterwards besides her.

It was said that a man from among the pious left a monetary deposit with someone. This person died suddenly, so the owner of the deposit asked for its return and was told by the inheritors of the man's wealth that they did not know anything about it. The pious man went to Al-Ḥasan and explained the situation to him. Al-Ḥasan said: 'Bring some *zamzam* water, make ablution (*wūḍu*) with it and perform a prayer sincerely. Then make supplication for the man to whom you gave the deposit. If he responds,[27] ask him about the deposit that you entrusted him with. He did so but did not receive any indication. He mentioned this to Al-Ḥasan. Al-Ḥasan then said: 'Go to Yemen and wait at the Barhoot Valley and supplicate for that man, if it is answered then ask him about the deposit. This man went to Yemen and did as was directed by Al-Ḥasan. The man responded (in his dream) and he asked him about the deposit, to which he was told where the deposit was; he proceeded to ask the pious man: 'O brother! Are you not a pious person? What misfortune has afflicted you that you have stooped so low? He replied: 'I was someone who severed the ties of kinship, I ask Allāh that He protect me from bad affairs.'[28]

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'Four things are calamitous: Having a large family, having little wealth, a bad neighbour in the place of residence, and a spouse who is a tyrant.'

He used to say: 'The best of things is wealth that is lawful (*ḥalāl*), a brother in Islām who if you ask will give sound advice regarding worldly matters and the religion.'

[27] Meaning if you see him in a dream or someone living vouches for him, ask him about the deposit.

[28] This story ascribed to Al-Ḥasan is false. There is no basis for this incident.

He used to say: 'A man may be learned and worship a lot or may not worship a lot, and he may be ignorant. However, Muslim Ibn Yasār was a learned man who performed a lot of worship.'

He used to say: 'Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh, all his achievements are due to Allāh. I have heard him command us to be kind and encourage us to be forgiving. He said: 'O people! Extinguish the fire of anger by remembering the Fire of Hell.' Abū'l-Dardā' (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to say: 'A man is closer to the anger of Allāh when he is angry.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'He who dresses his intellect will be spared from disaster.'*

He used to say: 'One who is cheated is he who has his intellect cheated.' He used to say: 'Mend ties with people by having good manners for indeed those who share a long relationship are few.'

Yunus Ibn Hubayb said: 'I heard Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī—may Allāh have mercy on him—say: 'Two things will not get along at all: satisfaction and envy. Two things will never be apart: 'competition and envy.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'A man reaches nobility via his intellect, his shyness and his kindness.'

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* Meaning a person should be discerning and careful what type of knowledge he should share, and with whom·

CHAPTER THREE

The Wise Sayings and Admonitions He Stated with Eloquence and Brevity

AL-ḤASAN HEARD a man saying: 'O Allāh! Destroy the wicked.' He said: 'You would then feel alienated along the Path, for those who restrain themselves would be scarce.'

He used to say: 'This religion is strong, the truth is heavy, and the human is weak. One of you should carry what he can bear, because if the servant burdens himself more than it could bear, he makes it susceptible to boredom and weariness.'

He used to say: 'Sickness is the body's *zakah*, just as almsgiving is the zakah for wealth. Each body that does not complain (of sickness) is like wealth on which no *zakah* is made.'

He also used to say: 'The best deeds are contemplation and piety. Whosoever's life is like that, he is saved. Otherwise, he should deem it wasted.'

He used to say: 'Pondering is a mirror that shows you your good deeds from your bad ones. Whoever depends on it succeeds, and whoever neglects it is exposed.'

A man told him once: 'O Abū Sa'īd! You have conveyed a hadīth to me, but I have forgotten it.' To which Al-Ḥasan said: 'Without forgetfulness, scholars would be many.'

Aban said: 'I entered upon Al-Ḥasan in the *masjid*, so I asked: 'Did you pray, may Allāh be merciful to you?' He said: 'No!' I said: 'The people of the market have already prayed.' He remarked: 'Who takes the people of the market as his standard for religiousness? When their sales are good, they delay the prayer, and when the sales stagnate, they expedite their prayer.'

He used to say: 'Beware of three matters—do not give shaytan control of yourself in them: Do not be alone with a woman even if you intend to teach her the Qur'ān; do not enter upon the Sultan (ruler) even if you intend to enjoin him to do good and forbid him from evil; do not accompany a person of *bid'ah*,[29] for he will sicken your heart and spoil your faith.'

He also used to say: 'Look for sweetness (*ḥalāwa*) in three matters: in prayer (*ṣalah*), in the recitation of the Qur'ān (*qirā'a*), and in Allāh's remembrance (*dhikr*). If you find it, go on and rejoice; otherwise, know that your door (to goodness) is locked, so strive to open it.'

He used to say: 'Were it not for three things, the man would not bow his head: death (*mawt*), sickness (*maraḍ*) and poverty (*faqr*). Beyond them, he is exuberant.'

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[29] An innovation that is made part of religion.

He also used to say: 'O people! By Allāh, we were not created to vanish (*fanā'*); we were created for immortality (*baqā'*). However, we move from one home[30] to another home.'

Abū'l-'Alā' Al-Ma'arrī put that into poetic verses, so he said:

People were created for immorality,
yet some thought themselves destined for evanescence.

They are merely moved from the home of deeds to
the home of wretchedness or happiness.

He also used to say: 'Whoever honoured a man of *bid'ah* has strived towards demolishing of Islām (*hadm al-Islām*).'

He also used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When the wicked is praised, Allāh Almighty becomes Angry."'[31]

He also used to say: 'Beware of the ignorant worshipper (*'abd al-jāhil*) and the wicked scholar (*'ālim al-fāsiq*), for they hold tribulation (*fitnah*) for every bewitched person (*maftūn*).'

He used to say: 'O son of Adam! Do not be fooled by the statement, 'You will be [gathered] with those whom you love', for you will not catch up with the pious (*abrār*) without following their deeds. The Jews and Christians love their Prophets, but by Allāh, they will not be gathered with them nor be let into their grouping;

[30] The word *'home'* here, and Islamic literature in general, is a euphemism for life.

[31] Ibn Hibbān, *al-Majruhīn*, 2/339; Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Imān*, #4886; Al-Khatīb, *Tarīkh al-Baghdād*, 8/428 and others with slight variations. It is a weak narration.

they will be firewood of Hell (*jahannam*) and will come to enter it.'

He used to say: 'This *ummah* will remain upon goodness and in the care and protection of Allāh, until its good people are kind to its evil, their pious glorify their wicked, and their Qur'ān reciters incline towards their rulers. Thereupon, the blessing of Allāh will be removed from them, tyrants will be let loose on them afflicting them with the worst torment, and the punishment of the Hereafter is more severe and more enduring, and terror (*ru'b*) will be cast into their hearts.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan saw Na'īm Ibn Ridhwan walking arrogantly, so he said: 'Look at him! There is no organ in him except it is a blessing from Allāh Almighty, and a curse from the devil.'

He used to say: 'Allāh Almighty takes the believers to account on the Day of Judgement on the basis of kindness and favour, and He Punishes the disbelievers on the basis of evidence and justice.'

He used to say: 'How odd are the tongues that describe [the truth], the hearts that know and the deeds that contradict!'

He also used to say: 'Whoever behaves in a way that places him under suspicion, cannot blame those who backbite him.'

He once saw a man playing with gravel and supplicating: 'O Allāh! Marry me to the Houris of Paradise!' He observed: 'He is asking for the Houris while playing like mad people do.'

He used to say: 'Whoever wishes to know which state he is in,

should refer his deeds to the Qur'ān in order to identify loss from superiority.

He also used to say: 'May Allāh have mercy on a person who referred himself to the Book of Allāh, if they conformed, he would praise Allāh and ask Him for more, and if they disagreed, he would repent and return soon after.

He used to say: 'How strange is man! The recording Angels are above his head, his tongue is their pen, his saliva is their ink, and yet, he keeps talking about that which does not concern him.'

He used to say: 'O Son of Ādam! You love to recount your good deeds, and you hate to recount your bad deeds, you impose blame on others based on assumption, while demanding certainty for yourself, all the while knowing that two Angels are assigned to you to record your words and deeds.'

He used to say: 'O Son of Ādam! For the wise, the hard work of the night does not prevent the hard work of the day, nor vice versa, because the fear [of Allāh] accompanies his heart until he becomes at the Mercy of his Lord.'

He used to say: 'Beware of praise, for it is slaughter!' (Meaning praising someone in their presence or seeking praise for oneself.)

It is narrated that a man was praised in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ), so he said: "You have ruined the man! If he heard it, he won't find success thereafter."[32]

He used to say: 'He is not fair to his Lord—he who thinks poorly of Him and treats His provision impatiently.'

[32] Bukhārī, 10/476 and Muslim, 4/3001

He used to say: 'Nothing is worthier of restraining than your tongue, and nothing is more worthy of rejection than your whims.'

He used to say: 'The untamed animal does not require the restraining bridle more than one's own self.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You will not die before your time, you will not be deprived of your provision, nor will the provision of others be given unto you. Why do you then toil, and for what are you killing yourself?'

A Bedouin met Al-Ḥasan and said: 'May Allāh bless you! Teach me the vastness of religion, which is neither extreme nor descending with slackness.' Al-Ḥasan said: 'You have it well my nephew![33] Moderation is the best of virtue.'

He used to say: 'Whoever is not experienced in a matter will be tricked, and whoever fights against the truth will be defeated.'

He used to say: 'The human roams between three states: A coming adversity, a passing blessing and a fatal death.'

He also used to say: 'Being human is a destination for adversities, calamities and death.' Cry you then and say:

رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا فِي ٱلدُّنۡيَا
حَسَنَةٗ وَفِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ حَسَنَةٗ وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ ٢٠١

"Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good

[33] In Arabic, the expression *'my nephew'* can be used metaphorically, like *'my son'*, or *'my child'* in English.

> and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."[34]

When Al-Ḥasan heard about the murder of Al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī[35] (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*), he cried and sobbed, saying: 'Oh [how great is] my regret! What has become of this *ummah*? A son killed the son of its Prophet (ﷺ). O Allāh! Be Witness for him:

وَسَيَعْلَمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَىَّ مُنقَلَبٍ يَنقَلِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

> "And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned."[36]

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Put forth what you wish for of deeds, good or otherwise, for you will come to them, and keep back what you wish, for you will return to it.'

He used to say: 'Whoever lives until the end of times should lock himself up in his house.'

He also used to say: 'Why do I hear voices (around me) but see no close friends.'

It is said: 'A man from the Khawārij appeared in the Peninsula,[37] he came out with an outrageous opinion, then denounced it and wished to change it, but he committed a more outrageous act in

[34] *Al-Baqarah* (2): 201

[35] The grandson of the Prophet (ﷺ).

[36] *Al-Shu'arā'* (26): 227

[37] Probably in reference to the peninsula that lies between the Euphrates and Tigris, meaning modern-day Iraq.

the process.'[38]

He used to say: 'Whoever denounced himself in public has praised himself, and wretched is what he did.'

He also used to say: 'Had it not been for the righteous ones, the earth would have swallowed its inhabitants; had it not been for the pious, the nation would have perished; had it not been for scholars, people would have been like cattle; had it not been for rulers, people would have eaten one another; had it not been for the fools, the world would have been ruined; and had it not been for the wind, what is between the heaven and the earth would have smelled foul.'

He also used to say: 'Three things are devastating: a leader that you follow who then misleads you, a neighbour who when knowing a good thing [about you] he hides it and upon knowing a bad thing he spreads it, and a manifest poverty that allows no pleasure for its bearer.'

Al-'Alā' Ibn Ziyād said: 'I asked Al-Ḥasan: 'Suppose there are two people: one of them devoted himself to worship and the other devoted himself to provide for his children; which of them is better?' Al-Ḥasan said: 'If both are upright, the one who devoted himself to worship is better.''

He also used to say: 'If you see something undesirable in your child, repent to your Lord and return to Him, because this is something aimed at you.'[39]

[38] Outrageous act of killing without any legal right.

[39] Meaning the parents' own fault and tendency to sin.

He used to say: 'When people display knowledge while neglecting deeds, voice their love for one another while hating each other in their hearts, and sever the ties of kinship, Allāh (the Exalted in praise) curses them, so He deafens them and blinds their vision.'

A man asked him about backbiting (*ghiba*) and about what merits it, he said: 'It is, by Allāh, the punishment of Allāh, the Majestic, which He pours upon His servants when they disobey Him and slacken in worshipping Him.'

He was asked: 'O Abū Sa'īd! What destroys people?' He said: 'Their lack of satisfaction (*qila al-riḍā'*) with Allāh Almighty." He was asked: 'What causes their lack of satisfaction with Allāh Almighty?' He replied: 'Their ignorance of Allāh and lack of acquaintance (*qila al-ma'rifa*) with Him.'

He used to say: 'Separating oneself from the fools is means of nearness (*qurb*) to Allāh, accompanying the wise is establishing (*iqāma*) the religion of Allāh, kindness to the believer is service (*khimah*) to Allāh, and strictness with the lewd is help (*'awn*) from Allāh.'

He used to say: 'Do not be less sane than the herded lamb, which stops by the shout and driven by gesture.'

He used to say: 'I heard Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh Al-Muzanī say: 'Work diligently [on the Path of Allāh], but if weakness causes you to fall short, (at least) refrain from sins.'

He also used to say: 'It is narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "People are not given, in this life, anything better than

certainty and well-being, so ask Allāh the Exalted, for them.'"[40] Then Al-Ḥasan used to add: 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has spoken the truth! Paradise was sought with certainty, Hell-fire was avoided with certainty, adversity was endured with certainty, obligations were fulfilled with certainty, and well-being contains much goodness.'

He used to say: 'The believer does not banter except he loses awareness, and then upon pondering he regrets it.'

He used to say: 'Whoever is not prevented by his prayer (*ṣalah*) from immorality and wrongdoing, his prayer does not increase him from Allāh Almighty except in remoteness, and does not increase him in the sight of Allāh Almighty except in hatred.'

He used to say: 'The one who observes his deeds is like the one who defends himself during war. In fact, observing one's deeds is better and more rewarding.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You consider forbidden deeds lawful, you commit crimes, you perpetrate atrocities and you dream wishfully [of good things] from Allāh! You will come to realisation, O wicked person, when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children, but only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart.'

He used to say: 'Refraining from sin is easier than going through repentance.' When Muḥammad Ibn Wāsi' heard this he said: 'May Allāh have mercy on Al-Ḥasan. By Allāh, this is true, if it coincided with a heart devoted to worship and a mind free from the

[40] Al-Tirmidhī, #3558; Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan Al-Kubrā*, #10720; *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, #38 with slight variation.

overwhelming worldly desires.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Why do you turn to evil when goodness is pure? O son of Ādam! Avoid major sins, for you'll be alright until you commit a major sin that changes your heart and demolishes your good deeds.'

He used to say: 'Only Allāh can reward the people of truth![41] The whip of 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) was more feared than the sword of Al-Ḥajjāj.'

Someone asked him: 'O Abū Sa'īd! Who among people will scream most intensely on the Day of Judgement?' He said: 'A man who introduced an evil practice that people followed, a ruler who was cruel to his subjects, and a man who was granted a blessing, which he used to disobey Allāh, the Most Exalted.'

He used to say: 'Time passes over the believer while he is in the same state of holding his position and giving the same advice; it is the hypocrite that changes in order to appeal to every group of people and to attain every possible benefit.'

He used to say: 'The believer's words conform to his deeds; he is in secret as he is in public, and his presence and absence are the same. As for the hypocrite, his words contradict his deeds, he is in secret unlike he is in public, and his absence and presence are inconsistent.'

A man asked him: 'Can the believer feel envy?' He said: 'Woe to you! How did you forget the brothers of Yūsuf (*'alayhis-salām*) and what envy did to them?'

[41] An expression that aims to praise someone.

He used to say: 'It is not considered backbiting with regards to three people; the openly lewd and when it's mentioned about him; the innovator in religion and when this is mentioned; and the unjust ruler when his injustice is mentioned.'

Ḥumayd—Al-Ḥasan's servant—narrated that he asked him once: 'O Abū Sa'īd! May Allāh bless you; do you not see the confusion people are in? He replied: 'O Abū'l Khayr! There are four things that straightened people out, and two that corrupted them. As for those that straightened people out, the first of them was 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) on the day of the Ṣaqifah, when the Anṣār said: 'A leader from us and a leader from you." 'Umar said: 'Do you not know that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The leader is from (the tribe of) Quraysh?' They said: 'We do.' He said: 'Do you not know that he (ﷺ) brought Abū Bakr forward to lead the prayers?' They said: 'We do.' He said: 'Then who among you wishes to put himself forward before Abū Bakr?' They said: 'No one.' Thereupon, all the Anṣār accepted it. Had it not been for Umar's doing, people would have disputed leadership, and each group would have claimed it for themselves until the Day of Judgement.'

Then there is what Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did when he consulted people regarding the apostates (*ahlul-radd*). All of them advised him to accept them because of the prayer they perform and disregard their abstinence of giving the *zakah*. But he firmly said: 'By Allāh! If they withheld from me a piece of rope they used to give to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) I will fight them over it.' Had it not been for what Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did, people would have denied *zakah* until the Day of Judgement.

Then there is what 'Uthmān (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did when he united the people on a single *muṣḥaf* (codex) he gathered the Qur'ān within. People used to recite it differently and some would say: 'Our recitation is better than yours', until some almost accused each other with blasphemy. Had it not been for what 'Uthmān (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did, people would have disbelieved in the Qur'ān until the Day of Judgement.

Then, there is what 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did when he fought the people of Baṣrah. When the fight was over, he divided among his companions the fortune that the army captured. They said: 'O Amir Al-Mu'minīn! Why do not you divide among us their children and women [as captives]?' He denounced their suggestion and request vehemently, saying: 'Who shall take Umm Al-Mu'minīn[42] in his share?'

Then he asked: 'Those women whose sons and husbands died, are they required a waiting period [before getting remarried], and do they inherit the quarter, the third or the sixth [of the deceased's fortune]?' They said: 'Yes.' Had they been slaves, they would not have inherited nor would they have been required to have a waiting period. Therefore, they realised the soundness of his Judgement, accepted his view and approved of his ruling. Had it not been for what 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) did, people would not have known the provisions of fighting *Ahlu'l-qiblah*.[43]

As for the two matters that corrupted people:

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[42] Umm Al-Mu'minīn literally means *'The mother of the believers'*, and it refers to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ).

[43] *Ahlul-Qiblah* literally means *'People of the Qiblah'*, and it refers to people who pray towards the same *qiblah*, meaning, those who declare themselves Muslims.

What 'Amr Ibn Al-'Āṣ (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) did of raising the mushafs and saying what he did until the Khawārij chose arbitration, for the effects of that arbitration remain until the Day of Judgement. 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) understood what 'Amr wanted, so he said: 'It is a word of truth but the intentions behind it are false.'

The second matter is what Al-Mughīrah Ibn Shu'bah did, when Mu'āwīyah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) wrote to him: 'Come to me, O Mughirah, so I can inform you." But, he was a few days late to arrive; so when he arrived, Mu'āwīyah asked him: 'What delayed you?' Al-Mughīrah said: 'A matter that I had started and hated to come before finishing it.' He asked: 'What is that?' He said: 'I took the pledge of allegiance for Yazīd from the people of Kufa.' He said: 'Did you?' He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Go back to your work and finish what you started.' When he left, his companions asked him: 'What did you do?' He said: 'By Allāh! I have put Mu'āwīyah's leg in my trap, and it will remain therein until the Day of Judgement.'

Al-Ḥasan said: 'For that action, these people starting taking the pledge of allegiance for their sons, and the Caliphate became an inheritance. Otherwise, it would have been [determined by] consultation, not attained except by whom people agree on their merit and worthiness of leadership until the Day of Judgement.'

He used to say: 'It was narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A time will come upon people when living is only earned through disobedience (to Allāh). In that, marriage will become undesirable and bachelorhood will become permissible."'[44]

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[44] See: Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Ḍa'īfah*, #3270.

He also used to say: 'Among those who passed away before you are some, who if one of them donated as much fortune as the pebbles on earth, he would fear that it may not be accepted or that he may not be saved, due to the gravity of the matter in his heart.'

He was asked about 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), so he said: 'He was, by Allāh, an arrow of truth thrown by Allāh Almighty, he was the pious of this nation, at the peak of its merit and honour. He was a close cousin of the Messenger (ﷺ), the father of Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥusayn (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*); the husband of Fāṭimah Al-Zahra' (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*). He was not someone stealing the money of Allāh, being a miser in the affairs of Allāh or weary in the obedience of Allāh. He gave the Qur'ān all his effort, and he knew his rights and responsibilities therein. May Allāh be pleased with him.'

[45] In reference to the worldly fortunes

CHAPTER FOUR

Disparaging the Worldly Life (*dham al-dunya*) and Discouraging from Clinging to it

HISHAM IBN ḤASAN NARRATED that he heard Al-Ḥasan say: 'By Allāh! Anyone granted abundantly in one of his worldly affairs and doesn't fear that this is to lure to seduce him; it takes away from his deeds, religiousness and intellect. On the other hand, anyone for whom Allāh restricted worldly provision who does not believe that this is good for him, it takes away from his deeds and shows his poor Judgement.'

He used to say: 'Any Muslim who is given his provision day by day and does not realise this is good for him has poor Judgement.'

He used to say: 'Allāh the Exalted, grants the servant of the worldly pleasures to allure him, and withholds from him out of consideration for him.'

He also used to say: 'I observed people who gave less regard for the worldly life than the dust on which you walk.'

He used to say: 'May Allāh have mercy on people who regarded the worldly life as a trust until they returned it to its owner and left with light loads. I have observed people who have been offered the worldly pleasures when they were in need, but they rejected it out of fear of the Day of Judgement.'

He used to say: 'By Allāh! The worldly life does not deserve or merit someone to waste his honour and religiousness for its sake.'

He also used to say: 'By Allāh! I never marvelled at something as I marvel at someone who does not regard loving the worldly life a major sin. By Allāh! Loving it tops the major sins, for did the major sins diversify except for it? Were the idols worshipped or was the Most Merciful Lord disobeyed except for the love of the worldly life? The wise does not pity its lowliness, nor struggle to attain it and does not fret over losing it.'

He used to say: 'People are gathered naked on the Day of Judgement, except people who were not influenced in the worldly life.'

He also used to say: 'O people! By Allāh! No one holds this dirham[45] dear except is humiliated by Allāh on the Day of Judgement. It was said that when the dinār and dirham were first made, Iblīs glorified them, placed them on his head and said: 'Whoever loved you is truly my slave; I will control him as I wish.'

He said: 'If people love the worldly life, then it isn't surprising if they worshipped an idol or taken a deity other than Allāh as their

[45] In reference to the worldly fortunes

lord. Their love for the world leads them to such destruction.'

He used to say: 'We saw those who were given the worldly life by their striving for the Hereafter, but we never saw one who was given the Hereafter by his striving for the worldly life.'

He also used to say: 'For the believer, the worldly life is never free from disturbances.'

He used to say: 'It was narrated that 'Isā (*'alayhis-salām*) said: '(The worldly) life is the farmland of Iblīs (*shayṭān*), and people are his ploughmen.'[46]

He used to say: 'Whoever knows his Lord loves Him and prefers what He has [stored in the Hereafter], and whoever knows the worldly life and its deception is tempted away from it.''

He was asked: 'O Abū Sa'īd! Can we see Allāh, the Exalted, in the worldly life?' He said: 'No.'' He was asked: 'Then can we see Him in the Hereafter?' He said: 'Yes.' He was asked: 'What is the difference?' He said: 'The worldly life is transient, and so is everything therein, and the Hereafter is everlasting, so is everything therein. It is impossible for the Everlasting to be seen with the transient, and for the Infinitely Pre-existent to be seen by the created. However, when the Day of Judgement comes, Allāh, the Exalted, will create everlasting sights for his servants, with which they can see their Lord, as a favour and an honour to them.'

He used to say: 'It was conveyed that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) entered upon the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was lying on a bed made from (course) woven reeds that left marks

[46] cit. Al-Jahiz, *Al-Bayān wa'l Tabbyi-īn*, 3/108.

on the Prophet's (ﷺ) side. His eyes teared up, so the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, 'What is the matter with you, O Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb?' He said: 'I remembered Khosraw and Caesar. Their power and pleasures they enjoy. Then I saw you, Allāh's Messenger, close companion, chosen one and beloved, sleeping on a mat made from woven reeds!' He (ﷺ) said: "Are you not content, O 'Umar, that they have this world while we have the Hereafter?' He said: 'I am content, O Messenger of Allāh." He (ﷺ) said: "Then be aware, O 'Umar, that it is so.' He (ﷺ) continued, 'I am in this world like a traveller who rode on a scorching hot day and came upon a tree with a deepening shade, so he took a nap under it then he went on his way leaving it behind.'

Al-Ḥasan said: 'The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to ride on donkeys, wear wool, lick his fingers (after eating) and eat sitting on the floor. He (ﷺ) used to say: "I am but a slave [of Allāh], and I eat like a slave does."'[47]

He used to say: 'The dessert the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) would deem enjoyable was the wheat bread, so why do you, O servants of Allāh, seek the luxurious of rides, the soft clothing and the colourful foods?' Then he used to add: 'Woe to you! Are you not ashamed of how long you are permitted to live? Do you not wish to be like your righteous predecessors?'

He used to day: 'Whoever competes with you in religiousness, compete with him, and whoever competes with you in the worldly life, [leave it with him and] throw it in his face.'

He also used to say: 'I observed people and groups who were never delighted with a worldly matter they attained, or saddened

[47] Imām Aḥmad, *Kitāb Al-Zuhd*, (p.11); on the authority of 'Aṭā Ibn Abī Rabah. The chain is sound, see: Al-Albānī, *Silsilat Al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, #544.

for a worldly matter they lost. They had less regard for it than the dust on which you step. One would live his life without renewing his clothes, putting a pot over the fire or having a cover between him and the floor. They feared a Day when eyes will stare [in horror] and the hearts will be blinded.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do not let your heart (*qalb*) cling to anything of the worldly life; such is a wicked clinging. Severe your ties with it and shut its doors before you. Restrict yourself thereof, O deluded one, with what allows you to reach your destination. Beware thinking that you will boast on the Day of Judgement of your fortune and children. How impossible it is for any of that to be of use to you on that Day. That is the Day when the worldly life vanishes entirely, and only the deeds remain on the necks of its doers.'

He used to say: 'O people! Take life's serenity [i.e. be content with it] and avoid its disturbance [i.e. getting occupied with it]. Neither its serenity (*ṣafwa*) will become a disturbance for you, nor does its disturbance become serenity. Leave what is doubtful for that which causes no doubt, so that you may safeguard this life and the Hereafter. I have seen people who were more disinterested in what Allāh permitted them of the worldly pleasures than you are in what Allāh forbade you.'

He also used to say: 'No man is given anything of the worldly life except he is told, 'Take it along with an equivalent amount of vigilance (*ḥirṣ*).''

He used to say: 'Whoever praises the worldly life disparages the Hereafter. No one hates meeting Allāh except someone who is persistent in disobeying Him.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Allāh Almighty did not give you the worldly life except as a trial, and since He Created it, He did not keep it away from his believing servants except as a trial.'

Al-Ḥasan Ibn Ja'far said: 'I heard Mālik Ibn Dinār say: 'The dirham and the dinār are worth less than date seeds.' When I told Al-Ḥasan about this, he said: 'May Allāh have mercy on Mālik. They are, in my sight, worth less than pebble. The date seeds are consumed by animals and made use of by people, while the *dirham* kills whoever earns it unlawfully and throws him in the Fire of Hell, and wretched is the destination.'

He used to say: 'One of the things that make a person of resolve (*ḥimma*) disinterested in the worldly life and compel him to ignore it, while obliging him to be insistent upon it, is knowing that provisions therein were not divided in accordance to [elements of] risk (*qudr al-akṭār*).

He also used to say: 'I accompanied some people who used to eat and sleep on the floor. One of them was Ṣafwan Ibn Muhriz. He accustomed himself to eat a loaf of bread. He used to say: 'If I came to my family and had a loaf of bread, then may those seek and desire the worldly life suffer with it.' Another used to say: 'If I had a loaf of bread and drank a jug of water, then I want nothing else from your worldly life.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'Degrade the worldly life, for it is most honourable when degraded.'

It was narrated: 'If the worldly life (*dunyā*) is in the heart (*qalb*),

the Hereafter (*akhirah*) departs, because it is venerated and proud (*'aziza karīma*).'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You have an immediate life and a Hereafter, so do not give precedence to your immediate life over your Hereafter or you will regret it. Know that if you sell your worldly life for your Hereafter, you will win them both, and if you sell your Hereafter for your worldly life, you will lose them both.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! What you are deprived of the worldly life does not harm you as long as the good of the Hereafter is saved for you, and what you are granted of the worldly life does not benefit you if you are deprived of the good of the Hereafter.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Life is a mount. If you ride it, it will carry you, and if you carried it, it will overburden you.'

He used to say: 'O Son of Ādam! You are mortgaged with your deeds, reachable by your death, and presented before your Lord. Therefore, take what is in your hands as stock to what lies ahead of you, for when death comes the certainty arrives:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

> "The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart."[48]

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[48] *Al-Shu'arā'* (26): 88-89

He also used to say: 'May Allāh reward Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh for what he said: 'The worldly life: what passed thereof is a dream, and what remained are wishes and sins."

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'If you desire from the worldly life what only suffices you, the least thereof will suffice you, but if what you have thereof does not suffice you, nothing will.'

He used to say: 'Death (*mawt*) has exposed the worldly life, for it did not leave joy for anyone in it.'

He also used to say: 'If life is filled with pleasures (*ladhāt*), it is also filled with distress (*āfāt*) and consequences.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Beware of being a person of the worldly life, who becomes content or angry on its account, who fights for its sake and who strives and tires in it. Reject it to Hellfire if you are a seeker of Paradise. Otherwise, give up on wishful thinking you fool, for a wise man said:

> If a man's biggest concern is his worldly life
> He's clinging on to a rope of delusion

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Dwelling here is short [and temporal], and torment (*'adhāb*) there is long [and permanent]. It was narrated from an ascetic that, 'The worldly life gives birth to death, undoes what is agreed and returns what is given. All its dwellers run towards what they do not know and are unsatisfied with it, which is all evident that it is not a place of permanent settlement (*dār al-qarār*)."

He used to say: 'O son of Adam! Beware of procrastination (*taswīf*) for it is destructive. Some of you take the provision of Allāh

and spend it on building, excessiveness, extravagance, boasting and adorning the worldly life. Some of you may waste their religiousness in pursuit of their desires, while not donating a single dirham for the cause of Allāh and in evasion of His right. You will come to know, O foolish one!!'

He used to say: 'The believer is astute (*kayis*); when he looks, he sees, and when he thinks, he takes warning. He then takes to his worldly life, demolishes it and establishes his Hereafter; he does not demolish his Hereafter to establish his worldly life. He remains upon this manner until he meets his Lord, Who is pleased with him and who pleases Him. On the other hand, the hypocrite competes over his worldly life while being blinded from his Hereafter. He took the worldly life as his deity, so woe to him! Was he created for it? Was he commanded to strive for it? The deluded will come to realisation on the Day when:

يُعْرَفُ ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَٰهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِٱلنَّوَٰصِى وَٱلْأَقْدَامِ ﴿٤١﴾

> "The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet"[49]

'O son of Ādam! You cannot do without your share of the worldly life, while you are in more need of your share of the Hereafter. Therefore, strive for it as it will take you to your share of the worldly life and organise it for you, so that it goes with you where you go.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! The worldly life was described for you, the matters of the Hereafter were hidden from you, your time has drawn closer to you, you were commanded to work and the right of Allāh is more binding for you. Therefore, work for

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[49] *Al-Raḥmān* (55): 41

when your time comes, as your Lord will not be pleased with you unless you do what he obliged you.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! If you see people in righteousness, compete with them, and if you see them ruining themselves in pursuit of the worldly life (*ṭalab al-dunya*), leave them with what they chose for themselves. I have seen many people preferring their immediate life to the next one, and their worldly life to their Hereafter, so they were exposed, humiliated, destroyed and punished by the death of their hearts (*mawt al-qulūb*).'

He also used to say: 'The punishment for the scholar (*ʿaquba al-ʿulamā'*) is the death of his heart due to seeking worldly pleasures through the deed of the Hereafter.'

He also used to say: 'O deluded ones (*maghrūrūn*)! Life is but a carcass whose lovers are consuming, it is killing some of them, while others remain unaware. Whoever depended on it, humiliates himself and falls short, and whoever abstained from it is honoured and capable.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan passed by a man hymning:

There is no ugliness in me.
Yet a wicked fool may be seduced by me

He remarked: 'Allāh is great! By Allāh, if the worldly life could sing poetry (*shiʿr*), this would be it.'

Among Al-Ḥasan's poetry in describing the worldly life:

Like sleeping dream or a moving shadow

The wise is not fooled by the likes of it.

He used to say: '...The believer has worked for a few days, and by Allāh, he does not regret what he caught of the worldly pleasures and luxury, while despising it, belittling it and taking provision from it to the Hereafter. He did not hold the worldly life in his heart; he did not desire its pleasure, rejoice over its luxury or fret over its distress. While seeking the rewards from Allāh the Exalted, he went along fearful and hopeful [of Allāh], without seeking the rewards of the worldly life or inclining towards its pleasures. Thus, congratulations are for him! Because of that, Allāh has alleviated his fears and eased his account and secured him from punishment."

He also used to say: 'O people! Allāh is not (to be) deceived with regards to His Paradise. He does not grant it to any of His servants on account of wishful thinking."

He used to say: 'O people! Adhere to abstinence (*zuhd*) in the worldly life, for it was narrated that 'Isā (*'alayhis-salām*) used to say: 'My food is hunger, my sign is fear (*kawf*), my clothing is wool, my source of warmth in winter is the sun, my lantern is the moon, my ride is my feet and my dessert is what grows from the earth. Allāh knows that I go to sleep having nothing, and wake up having nothing, and I think that there is none on earth richer than me."

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'It was narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said one day: "By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muḥammad, the family of Muḥammad did not wake up having any food today,' and there were nine households."[50]

[50] *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, 3/238.

Al-Ḥasan would add: 'By Allāh, he did not say that to express impatience in waiting for the provision of his Lord, nor to ask for what he is not given, but to set an example for his nation, and to show them that he does not hold any regard for the world.'

He used to say: 'The keys to the worldly life and the treasures of the earth were presented to the Messenger (ﷺ), without Allāh decreasing anything from his rewards, but he refused to accept them and disapproved to contradict his Lord, to love what He hated or to raise what He put down. It was narrated that he (ﷺ) used to say: "Whoever lives through his (worldly) life, will find its ordeals easy to endure."'[51]

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'It is narrated that the worldly life will be brought on the Day of Judgement, with every adornment it had from the time Allāh Almighty Created it, being torn apart, and it will plead, 'O my Lord! Give me away to one of Your allies.' Allāh the Most High, will say: 'Be silent! Never did I create anything more loathsome to Me than you, and those who preferred and chose you over what I have [of Paradise]."

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'The believer is a captive in the life of this world, he strives to free himself, and he does not feel safe until he meets his Lord.'

A man asked him once: 'O Abū Sa'īd! What clothing do you like most?' He said: 'One which is most thick and rough." The man said: 'Was it not narrated that, "Allāh is Beautiful *(jamīl)*, He loves

[51] Similar wording found in Ibn Al-Jawzī's, *Al-Mawḍū'āt*, 3/180; he said the narration cannot be traced to the Prophet (ﷺ), but rather is the statement of 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Walīd.

beauty (*jamāl*)"?[52]' He said: 'O my nephew![53] You misunderstand. If beauty in the sight of Allāh was in clothing, the wicked (*fujjār*) would have a higher rank than the pious (*abrār*). Beauty means drawing nearer to Allāh by performing righteous deeds (*ṭā'āt*), avoiding sins (*mujānaba al-ma'āsī*) and maintaining good and beautiful manners (*makārim al-akhlāq*). This is what is authentically narrated from the Messenger (ﷺ) that he said: "I was sent to perfect good manners."

It was also narrated that 'Isā (*'alayhis-salām*) told his disciples, 'Hunger your bellies, untidy your hair and wear the robes of grief, that you may see your Lord with the eyes of your hearts."'

He used to say: 'Al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) was asked: 'Which people have the highest merit? He said: 'Those who do not care about the worldly life and in whose hand it is.'

He was asked: 'Who suffers the greatest loss?' He said: 'The one who sold the everlasting to gain the temporal.'

It was narrated that a man asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ): 'O Messenger of Allāh, guide me to such an action which, if I do, Allāh will love me and the people will also love me.' He (ﷺ) said: "Have no desire for this world, Allāh will love you; and

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[52] Muslim, 1/91 on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*)

[53] It is commonly used in a figurative sense when a man is talking to someone younger, like *'my son'* and *'my child'*

[54] Al-Muwaṭṭā, #8 and *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, 2/381 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

have no desire for what people possess, and the people will love you.'"[55]

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'When the person wakes up in the morning, four things become compulsory for him: 'Loving Allāh (*ḥubbullāh*), loving the religion of Allāh (*ḥubb al-dīnillah*), loving the Hereafter (*ḥubb al-akhira*) and hating the worldly life (*bughd al-dunyā*).'

A man asked him: 'O Abū Sa'īd! What do you say about the worldly life?' He said: 'What can I say about a life whose lawful entails reckoning, and who's unlawful entails punishment?' The man said: 'By Allāh, I never heard anything more concise than this.' Al-Ḥasan replied: 'No. The words of 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz are more concise and eloquent than mine. The governor of Homs wrote to him saying that the city walls have collapsed and need repairing, so he wrote back to him saying, 'Fortify your city with justice and purge it of oppression and it will be safe and peaceful from dangers."

He used to say: 'It was narrated that Allāh Almighty, inspired to the worldly life, 'Whoever serves Me, then serve him, and whoever serves you, then take him as your servant.'"[56]

[55] Ibn Mājah, #4102 and others; on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa'd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), with a weak chain of transmission. However, Abū Nu'aym records a similar narration in his *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā'*, 7/41 and is graded as ḥasan by Al-Nawāwī, Al-'Irāqī and others. See Al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Jāmi'*, #922.

[56] See: Al-Ḥākim, *Ma'arifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, #207.

Section One:
His Quotes regarding the Brevity of the Worldly Life

Al-Ḥasan—may Allāh have mercy on him—used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Step on the earth with your feet, for soon it will be your grave, and give up negligence (*ghafla*), for you have never ceased demolishing your life span since you came out of your mother's womb.'

'O son of Ādam! Do not overburden your day with the worries of tomorrow. Let each day have its worries. If you are destined to live for tomorrow, its provision will come to you.'

He used to say: 'May Allāh have mercy on a man who lives a simple life, so that he eats what gives him strength, wears ragged clothing and stuck his cheek to the ground, diligent in worship of his Lord, until his departure time comes while he is in that manner.'

He also used to say: 'Anyone who thinks death is far away is prone to do evil.'

It is said that a slave merchant passed by him and offered him a slave girl for a lot of money, so he said: 'Sell her for one *dirham*, for Allāh sold the Maids of Paradise (*ḥūr al-ʿayn*) to His believing servants for a penny or a morsel.'

He used to say: 'We entered upon Safwān Ibn Muhriz, while he lived in a house made of (bamboo-like) canes that had started to tilt. We said to him, 'May Allāh bless you. Should you not repair this house?' He said: 'How many have died while this house is still standing like this!"

He used to say: 'I saw a man who was hit by poverty and handed a dirham, so he said: 'I have no need for it. The market is closed, and I fear dying before spending it, leaving it as inheritance and being held to account for it. If I were to live until tomorrow, my provision is the responsibility of Allāh alone, no partner has He."

He also used to say: 'Allāh grants His servant to lure him, and deprives him in consideration for him. Whoever falls for the allurement of Allāh risks His Punishment.'

He used to say: 'You are but the count of your breaths and moments. Whenever time passes by you, a part of you is gone. May Allāh have mercy on the one who said:

We rejoice at the passing of days
While each passing day shortens one's life
So work diligently before the time comes
For profit and loss are (weighed) when that time comes

He also used to say: 'O son of Adam! You have time and you have hope.[57] If you reach your hope, it will bring you closer to your time, and if you reach your time, it will take you away from your hope.'

He used to say: 'Three people gathered to discuss the brevity of life. One of them said: 'No month passes me by except I think I will die in it.' The second said: 'No day passes me by except I think I will die in it.' The third said: 'I marvel greatly at every person of hope (who seeks a long life), one whose life is out of his control and whose provision comes from someone else.' He then recited:

[57] Hope in this context means the age that you hope you would live to reach.

He has not given death its due regard
He who is sure he would live until a certain time

He also used to say: 'It was narrated that when Allāh Almighty, created Ādam (*'alayhis-salām*), He made his time before him, and his hope [of a long life] behind him. When he committed the sin, he was turned around, so his hope became before him and his time behind him. That is why his offspring have hopes [of long lives] and are unaware of the nearness of death.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! If you shortened your expectations of life, you will anger your delusions of long life, and if you realised how little remains of your life, you will be disinterested in most of what you desire of your life."

It is said that Al-Ḥasan prayed *Janāzah* prayers and then walked to the graveyard and said: 'How great an admonition presented to the servants of Allāh this is! If only it found living hearts, but the hearts are dead.'

'O people! Death has exposed the worldly life, leaving no joy for those who are still residing in it. May Allāh have mercy on those who take sufficient provision from it, and leave the excess [in preparation] for the Day of his need and poverty, as if death has arrived and the deeds have stopped. May Allāh have mercy on the wise man that shortens his expectation of life and watches vigilantly over his time.'

He used to say when a funeral passed by him: 'Go [in the morning], for we are going to follow [in the afternoon],' or 'Go [in the afternoon], for we are going to follow [in the morning].'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan saw Mālik Ibn Dinār wearing a woollen

robe, so he asked him: 'Do you like the hide, may Allāh bless you?' He said: 'Yes.' He then stated: 'Have less regard for it, as it used to be on a sheep before you, and was taken away from it.'

He said: 'Khālid Ibn Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwīyah was asked: 'What is the thing closest?' He said: 'Death.' He was asked: 'Then what is the thing farthest?' He said: 'Hope for a long life.' He was asked: 'Then what is the most affable thing?' He said: 'A suitable friend.' He was asked: 'What is the loneliest thing?' He said: 'The dead.''

He used to say: 'It was narrated that a man told Umm al-Dardā' (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*): 'I find in my heart an illness to which I find no remedy: I find intense hardness and hopes of living long.' She said: 'Go to the graveyards, attend funerals and look at the dead; you shall hopefully be remedied.''

He used to say: 'It was found inscribed on a stone, 'O son of Ādam! If you realised how little remains of your life, you would give up your hopes of long life, would wish to increase your good deeds, and reduce your stinginess and trickery. Tomorrow, you will meet your regret, when your feet slip up, when your family and entourage give you up, when your close ones renounce you, when your loved ones leave you, and when you are called upon but cannot answer.'

He also used to say: 'Indeed, a person has no one between him and Ādam except dead fathers dappled in dead people.'

He used to say: 'Scholars to the ignorant ones are like doctors to the sick.'

Al-Ḥasan once heard Al-Ḥajjāj giving a sermon on the pulpit

of Baṣrah saying: 'O people! Allāh the Most Exalted, determined transience (*fanā'*) for the worldly life, and eternity (*baqā'*) for the Hereafter, so do not let observing this worldly life seduce you away from the unseen of the Hereafter. Overcome your hope of long life (*ṭūl al-aml*) with the realisation of the brevity of life.' He said: 'I marvel at Al-Ḥajjāj! How could he know what he knew and then deviate away from the truth?'

CHAPTER FIVE

Prayers of Forgiveness (*istighfār*), Supplications (*duʿā*ʾ) and Discouraging from Artificiality (*tasannu*ʿ) and Ostentation (*riyā*ʾ)

O MY LORD! Who is worthier of slipping and failure than I am? And who is more adequate of pardoning and forgiving than You are? You have created me weak, holding not for myself the power to benefit or harm!

O my Lord! Your knowledge of me precedes, Your Judgement of me is encompassing and Your command in me is reaching. I obeyed You with Your permission and help, praise is due to You, and I disobeyed You with Your knowledge, and the argument is Yours. Therefore, by the necessity of Your argument and the lack of mine, instil fear of you in my heart, so that I do not have hope or fear in anyone else besides You.

O Allāh, O Most Merciful of the merciful! Send your blessings

on Muḥammad, the final Messenger, and forgive me and all the believers. Sufficient for me is Allāh, and He is the best Disposer of affairs.

It was narrated that when Al-Ḥasan decided to travel, he would say: 'O You, who whenever is entrusted with something, preserves and returns it, I entrust You to those from whom I will be far—those who are present of my family and children, and everything that I own—so protect them, O You whose trust is never lost.'

When trouble or distress befell him, he used to say: 'O You, who prevented the hand of Ibrāhīm from slaughtering his son (Ismā'īl), while they were conversing and the son saying: 'Be gentle O father,' and Ibrāhīm replying: 'Endure Allāh's Command O son.' O You who sent the caravan for Yusuf in the desert at the bottom of the well, and who made him a king after slavery! O You who heard the man of the fish (Yūnus) in three levels of darkness! O You who returned the sight of Ya'qūb and turned his grief to joy! O You who took pity on the tears of Dāwūd and removed the adverse calamity of Ayyūb! O You who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon You, who helps the one who calls for Your Help! O You besides whom there is no Lord to be worshipped! O knower of private conversations, and remover of distress! I ask You to bestow Your blessing on Your chosen Prophet and select servant, Muḥammad, his Family and Companions, to shield me from what worries me and to remove my distress. O Best of those who is asked: O Best of those who is implored, O Most Merciful of those who is asked for mercy! Do good to me as much as befits You. O the ever most merciful. Sufficient for me is Allāh, and He is the best Disposer of affairs.'

He used to say as he entered the graveyard: 'O Lord of these decaying bodies and eroding bones whom left this world believing in You and hopeful of Your mercy, send them an inspiration from You and a greeting from me.'

Then he would add: 'It is narrated that when one says that, every dead person since Allāh created Ādam until the Day of Judgement ask Allāh for forgiveness on his behalf.'[58]

It is said that Al-Ḥajjāj called for him once and this frightened Al-Ḥasan, so he said: 'O Hearer of my prayer, O Helper in my ordeal, O Remover of my distress and calamity, O my Mercy-giving and Benefactor, O my Lord and the Lord of Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, their Descendants, Mūsā and 'Isā and Muḥammad (ﷺ), and the Lord of all mankind! By the right of (كٓهيعٓصٓ ۝١) "*Kāf, Hā, Yā, 'Ayn, Ṣād*",[59] (طه ۝١) "*Ṭa,Hā*",[60] and (يسٓ ۝١ وَٱلْقُرْءَانِ ٱلْحَكِيمِ ۝٢) "*Yāsīn.* By the wise Qur'ān",[61] bestow Your blessing on Muḥammad and his pure Family, and protect me from his evil and the evil of every evil being. Shield me from Al-Ḥajjāj, his party, his followers and his soldiers. With Your power, keep his attempts away from me, refuge me from his harm and evil, and do not give him power over me, O Lord of the universe. May Allāh bestow His blessings and peace upon our master, Muḥammad, the final Prophet.'

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[58] Words recorded here are not from the known invocations to be said when visiting the graveyard, and no example of such statement or meaning can be found in the *Sharī'ah* that is to be encouraged.

[59] *Maryam* (19):1

[60] *Ṭa,Hā* (20):1

[61] *Yāsīn* (36):1-2

When he got sick, he used to say: 'O Allāh! Do not make me of those who are regretful when they get sick, allured when they are healed, and distressed when they become poor. Suffice me as You do to someone who asked You for Sufficiency, protect me as You do to someone who asked You for protection, and guide me to Your love and satisfaction, O Merciful to whoever requests His mercy, and the One who accepts from whoever prays to Him.'

It is said that a man of the Khawārij used to lurk around Al-Ḥasan's counsel and harass his people, so Al-Ḥasan was asked: 'Why do you not complain about him to the ruler?' He said: 'I hope that the Lord of the ruler will suffice us.' When the man came, Al-Ḥasan turned towards the *qiblah* and said: 'O Allāh! Protect us from him however You wish,' so the man fell off his ride and was carried dead to his family. When Al-Ḥasan heard this, he said: 'Praise is due to Allāh who suffices those who ask Him for sufficiency and accepts the prayers of those who pray to Him. Woe to him for what deceived him about his Lord.'

When he finished his counsel, he used to say: 'O Allāh! Join me with the righteous who have passed away, make me of the righteous who still remain, and protect me from the evil of myself and the evil of every evil being.'

When news of Al-Ḥajjāj's death reached Al-Ḥasan, he said: 'O Allāh! He is an *ʿaqir*[62] for You, and You killed him. O Allāh! Get rid of his entourage as well.'

When he finished reciting the Qur'ān, he used to say: 'Truthful is Allāh, besides whom there is no deity, the Ever-Living who

[62] *ʿAqir* is a word that refers to someone who was causing a commotion and mischief for a while before suddenly dying.

does not die; the honourable Messengers have conveyed [what was revealed to them], and we are witnesses for what our Lord and Master said. Praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the universe. May Allāh bestow His blessing upon Muḥammad, the final Prophet, and his purified Family, his chosen Companions and his wives, the mothers of believers.

O Allāh! You have taught us the Qur'ān before we wished to learn it, made it exclusive for us before we realised its merit, and bestowed it upon us before we learned its benefits. O Allāh! If that was a favour, a generosity, a kindness towards us and a mercy that encompassed us without any power or capability on our part, then grant us, O Allāh, the strength to observe its rights, recite it properly, memorise its verses and apply its precise provisions and to clarify its unspecific ones.

O Allāh! Guide us through it, and enlighten our hearts with its insight. O Allāh! You have sent it down as healing to Your allies, misery to Your enemies and blindness to those disobedient to You.

O Allāh! Make it a guide for us in our worship, a fortified stronghold from Your punishment, and a light that guides us when we meet You, lights for us amidst Your creation, helps us traverse Your *Ṣirāṭ*[63] and leads us to Your Paradise.

O Allāh! We seek refuge in You from blindness to its knowledge, deviation from its message and falling short in fulfilling its rights.

O Allāh! Alleviate for us its burden, facilitate its memorisation, and make us of those who fulfil its right, perform its obligations, believe in its general provisions, follow its way, permit what it made

[63] The bridge in the Hereafter that mankind will traverse.

lawful and forbid what it made unlawful.

O Allāh! Let the little sleep suffice for us, and wake us up at the best time, when the mercy is sent down and the prayer is accepted.

O Allāh! Benefit us with the signs that You have diversified therein, and remind us of the examples You have set therein, and give us with it the glad tidings at our death.

O Allāh! Benefit us with the mighty Qur'ān, the verses and the precise and wise message.

O Allāh! We seek refuge from hardened hearts, and we ask your forgiveness for our crimes and sins.

O Allāh! You have blessed the Qur'ān, so grant us with it each blessing, and save us with it from each calamity.

O Allāh! Make it an accepted intercessor for us and a light, a healing, a guidance and an admonition.

O Allāh! Grant through it, tranquillity and composure for our hearts, facilitate with it for us the frequent asking for forgiveness, and give our hearts astuteness in understanding it, pleasure in frequenting it and tears in reciting it, so that we do not seek a substitute, exchange it for a price, or prefer to it a worldly matter. You are the Hearer of supplication, near and responsive.

'O Allāh! Make the Qur'ān a spring for our hearts, a healing to our chests, a light for our sights, a remover of our grief, an alleviator of our worries and distress, and our leader and guide to

the Gardens of Pleasure.

O Allāh! Do not leave a sin of mine without forgiving it, a concern of mine without alleviating it, a debt of mine without repaying it, an absent [close one] of mine without returning him, a dead [close one] of mine without bestowing mercy upon him, a sick [close one] of mine without healing him, nor any matter of the worldly life or the Hereafter, which pleases You and benefits us, and accomplishing it with Your facilitation and protection, O Ever-Merciful of the Merciful, O Helper of the help-seeker, O Responder to the supplication of the desperate.

Bestow, O Allāh, Your blessings on Muḥammad, the final Prophet, and his purified Family.

Section One:
Belittling Pretentiousness and Ostentation

He—may Allāh be merciful to him—used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do not do any righteous deed only to be seen by people, and do not leave any righteous deed out of shyness.'

It is said that he gave a sermon one day; a man took a deep sigh. He asked the man: 'O my nephew! Why did you do that? If you were sincere, you have drawn attention to yourself, and if you were insincere, you have ruined it. People used to supplicate diligently without their voice being heard. One who lived before you would fully recite the Qur'ān without his neighbour hearing his voice, while the other would learn to obtain understanding in the religion without his friend knowing about it. One of them was told, 'I admire your lack of restlessness in your prayer and your humble submission therein.' He replied: 'O my nephew, and how

would you know where my heart was?'

He used to say: 'Rajā' Ibn Ḥaywah looked at a man who was sleepy after the dawn prayer (*fajr*), so he told him, 'Be careful, may Allāh bless you, or someone might think this is due to staying up to pray all night and your deeds will become worthless.'

It was narrated that a man asked the Messenger (ﷺ): 'O Allāh's Messenger! We are confused about hypocrisy; so what is it?' He (ﷺ) said "The one who does good deeds only to be seen by people is a hypocrite."'

It was said that Al-Ḥasan saw Farqad Al-Sabkhī wearing woollen robes, so he said: 'O Farqad! You may think that your robes give you stature among people, but I heard that the most common clothing of the people of Hellfire is robes.'

He used to say: 'The show-off one wants to overcome Allāh's fate for him. He is, in the sight of Allāh, wicked and loathed, and He reveals that to His believing servants. The show-off wants to show people, 'I am pious', and how could he when Allāh's knowledge of his showing off is instilled in the hearts of His servants.'

Al-Ḥasan said: 'I was told that a man passed by another man reciting the verse,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّـٰلِحَـٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَـٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾

"Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds—the Most Merciful will appoint for them

affection."[64]

So he said: 'By Allāh, I will worship Allāh to a degree that will make me famous in this world.' He kept praying and he maintained fasting, so much so that he did not miss a day, and was not seen except praying or supplicating. Whenever he passed by people, they would say: 'He is still showing off, what a show-off he is!' He rebuked himself saying, 'May Allāh curse you! I do not hear you spoken off except negatively, and I do not think that this happened to you except due to the corruption of your religiousness, the corruption of your belief and that you were not sincere to Allāh with your deeds.' He then maintained his good deeds, without increasing anything, but he turned his intention around, so people's knowledge of him turned around as well. Whenever he passed by people, they would say: 'May Allāh be merciful to him.' Then say: 'Now! Now [he has become sincere]."

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'Be sincere to Allāh in your deeds, for it was narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever perfects his prayer when people see him and neglects it when they do not, then he is belittling his Lord."[65] He (ﷺ) also used to say: 'Whoever shows off his deeds to people, Allāh will expose him to His Creation on the Day of Judgement, humiliate him and belittle him."'[66]

[64] *Maryam* (19):96

[65] 'Abdu'l-Razzaq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, #3738; Al-Marwazī, *Ta'ẓīm qadr al-Ṣalah*, #865 and others. Narrated on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*). The chain is weak, see: Al-Dhahabī, *Al-Mahdhab*, 2/729; Al-Haythamī, *Majma' Al-Zawa'id*, 10/224; Al-Albānī, *Ḍa'īf Al-Targhīb*, #18.

[66] Bukhārī, 11/336 and Muslim, 4/2987 on the authority of Jundub (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do you feel no shame? You speak the words of the wicked, and you assault with the assault of tyrants."

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You wear the clothing of the pious, you do the deeds of the wicked, you humble yourself the humbling of the fleeing (from the world), and you look with the sight of those who seek (the world). Woe to you! These are not the traits of the sincere. You will stand on the Day of Judgement before the One who Knows the deception of the eyes, and all that the hearts conceal.'

It is conveyed that Al-Ḥasan said: 'It is narrated that the one from whom Allāh the Exalted, accepts a single good deed, will enter Paradise.' It was asked: 'O Abū Saʿīd! Where do the [other] good deeds of people go?' He said: 'Allāh the Exalted, only accepts the sincere (*khaliṣ*) good (*ṭayyib*) deed without conceit (*ʿujb*) and showing off (*riyāʾ*). For whoever's one good deed is wasted, he is among the losers.'

He used to say: 'It is reported that Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr saw a man pretending dead while in worship, so he said: 'O my nephew! Islām is alive and not dead, so revive it and do not kill it; may Allāh cause your death and not give life to you.'

He used to say: 'Whoever denounced himself in public has praised himself, and wretched is what he did.'

Al-Ḥasan narrated that 'A'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhā*) saw a man feigning death, so she said: 'What is the matter with him?' They said: 'He is pious.' She said: 'May Allāh drive him away! 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) was more pious than him, yet when he walked, he walked swiftly; when he beat, he caused pain, and when he fed,

he filled the stomachs. Therefore, give up pretending because Allāh does not accept the deeds of a pretender.'

He used to say: 'It is narrated that a pious man said: "The best asceticism (*zuhd*) is to hide asceticism *(ikhfā' al-zuhd*)."'

He also used to say: 'Whoever adorned himself before people with what he does not do before Allāh [in private], this will discredit him in Allāh's sight.'

He used to say: 'Contemplation (*tafakkur*) for an hour is better than praying (*qiyām al-layl*) the whole night.'

He also used to say: 'If there is virtue (*faḍl*) in mingling, then there is safety in solitude (*'uzla*).'

It was narrated that Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) passed by Marwān Ibn Al-Ḥakam while he was building his house, so he said: 'O Abū 'Abdu'l-Quddus! Build an austere building, have far-reaching hopes, restrict your hopes for (long) life and eat but little; the return is to Allāh.'

He used to say: 'Previous nations were tried with (having) long hopes (*ṭūl al-aml*).'

It was narrated that Ḥammād Ibn Salamah conveyed that Abū 'Uthmān Al-Nahshaī used to say: 'I have lived for a hundred and thirty years. There is nothing I've not denied, except my hope [for longer life], for it increases every day.'

It is said that Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh fretted strongly over his wife's death, so Al-Ḥasan discouraged him from being anxious. He kept

describing her merits, so Al-Ḥasan said: 'With Allāh is what is better than her.' He then married her sister, then he met Al-Ḥasan later and said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! She is indeed better.' He said: 'May Allāh protect you! I was referring to the Maids of Paradise (*ḥūr al-'ayn*).' Then he recited:

You hope to live as long as [Prophet] Nūh
Yet the Angel of death knocks every night

He used to say: 'A worshipper saw a friend of his in distress, so asked him about his case, 'I had an orphan child for whom I was caring for the sake of Allāh, but he died.' His friend said: 'So seek another orphan, for it is not impossible.' He said: 'I fear I will not find an orphan as ill-mannered as he was.' His friend said: 'Woe upon you! If I were you, I would not mention his poor manners.' As if he hated to boast of his troubles with that orphan.'

He used to say: 'It is narrated that Abū'l-Darda' (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Three make me laugh, and three make me cry: I laugh because of someone who is hopeful of long life when death is seeking him, and someone who remains unaware while he is being aware of, and someone who laughs hard without knowing whether his Lord is pleased or angry with him. I cry because of the seriousness of the journey [in the Hereafter], the shortcoming of the deeds and the standing before Allāh Almighty, after which I do not know whether I will be taken to Paradise or to Hellfire.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'Allāh Almighty has made some traits in His creation, without which the Prophets and the righteous would not benefit from anything of the worldly life. They are: hope [of long life], the term [of one's death] and forgetfulness (*nisyān*).'

CHAPTER SIX

The Wise Sayings and Admonitions Conveyed from Him upon Reciting the Qur'ān

AL-ḤASAN USED TO SAY: 'It is narrated that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'O people! Recite the Qur'ān, and hope for the rewards of Allāh the Exalted, before a time when people come who recite it hoping for rewards of people."

He used to say: 'If the person sought the Qur'ān and knowledge for the sake of Allāh, it does not take long before it is seen in his humble submissiveness, asceticism, patience and humility.'

He also used to say: 'May Allāh have mercy on a person who referred himself to the Book of Allāh; if they conformed, he would praise Allāh and ask Him for more, and if they disagreed, he would repent and return soon after.'

He also used to say: 'O people! This Qur'ān is a healing for the

believers, and a leader for the pious. Whoever takes it as his guide is guided, and whoever turns away from it is wretched and afflicted.'

He used to say: 'Among the most wretched people are those who recite the Qur'ān not knowing its sunnah, nor following its way, "Such are cursed by Allāh and cursed by those who curse"[67] The Muslim of old used to recite the Qur'ān and pray all night with its chapters, and when he woke up, its impact would be apparent on his face; while, one of you recites the Qur'ān without having surpassed his whims. Allāh Almighty said:

كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓا۟ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ

> "[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], that they might reflect upon its verses."[68]

By Allāh, what matters is not memorising its letters while ignoring its provisions. One of you says: 'I have recited the Qur'ān without missing a letter thereof,' He is a liar, by Allāh! He has missed it all. By Allāh, by Allāh, these are not reciters, scholars or the wise,

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِى عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾

"Indeed, We will cast upon you a heavy word."[69]

which, Exalted is He, intends for it to be applied and implemented. He also said:

[67] *Al-Baqarah* (2): 159

[68] *Ṣad* (38):29

[69] *Al-Muzammil* (73):5

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَٰهُ فَٱتَّبِعْ قُرْءَانَهُۥ ﴿١٨﴾

"So when We have recited it, then follow its recitation"[70]

meaning allow what it made lawful and forbid what it made unlawful. The Messenger (ﷺ) passed away when those of his Companions who had completely memorised the Qur'ān were few, out of veneration for it and perseverance in memorising its interpretation and applying its injunctions, whether specific or general.'

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'There are three types of Qur'ān reciters: Some people took it as means to attain worldly rewards, some mastered its recitation but forfeited its provisions, they used it to derive fortune from rulers and to boast with it to people. This type of Qur'ān bearer has increased in number—may Allāh reduce their number and drive them away. The third type is people who recite the Qur'ān and understood its verses, sought healing and cure with it and placed it on the ailing parts of their hearts. Such are the people for whom the invocation of rain is answered, for whom blessings are sent, and with whose prayers indignation is prevented. They are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh—they are the successful.'

It is narrated that a delegation from Yemen came to the Prophet (ﷺ), so he recited the Qur'ān to them and they wept (because of it). Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) said: 'We used to be like that until our hearts hardened."'

He used to say: 'O people! Adhere to looking in the *muṣḥaf* and recite the Qur'ān from therein. It is narrated that 'Uthmān (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) used to say: 'I dislike that a day should pass

[70] *Al-Qiyamah* (75):18

without looking at the covenant of Allāh,' referring to the *muṣḥaf.* He was asked about this and he said: 'It is blessed.' He used to recite the Qur'ān from the *muṣḥaf* for its blessing.

He was always seen with the *muṣḥaf* in his lap, and he was one of the best memorisers of the Qur'ān among the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions."

It is said that supper was presented to Al-Ḥasan, when he started eating, he heard someone reciting the verses:

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَآ أَنكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾

"Indeed, with Us [for them] are shackles and burning fire and food that chokes and a painful punishment."[71]

He (lost his appetite and) called for his servant, 'O slave girl, take your supper away,' and he kept repeating the verse and weeping the remainder of his night.

It is also said that he remained in that state for three days until his son brought some of his friends with food and he ate with them."

He once recited the verse:

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned,

[71] *Al-Muzammil* (73):12-13

and they will not be treated unjustly."[72]

Then he gasped: 'Oh! What an admonition by which Allāh exhorts to His servants, if they were to accept it!' He also recited the verse:

أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ
لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ لَهُۥ
فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ وَأَصَابَهُ ٱلْكِبَرُ وَلَهُۥ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَآءُ
فَأَصَابَهَآ إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَٱحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ
لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

"Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines underneath which rivers flow in which he has from every fruit? But he is afflicted with old age and has weak offspring, and it is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned. Thus does Allāh make clear to you [His] verses that you might give thought."[73]

Then he said: 'This is an analogy that Allāh sets for His servants, for the benefit and insight of those whom He chose for guidance. Allāh Almighty, said: 'The example of the man when he grows old and weak, has many children and has need for his harvest but then it gets burned by fire when he needs it most, is like the man when he comes to the Day of Judgement, bare, thirsty and in need of good deeds he did, which he thought would be there for him; but he finds they were wasted by the consequences [of his actions] and written off by the sins at a time when he has the most need of them and the highest hope for their benefits.' He

[72] *Al-Baqarah* (2):281

[73] *Al-Baqarah* (2):266

once recited the verse:

كَانُوا۟ قَلِيلًا مِّنَ ٱلَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

"They used to sleep but little of the night."[74]

and said: 'They continued praying until the approach of dawn, and then they would sit and ask Allāh for forgiveness.' He was asked about:

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ ٱلَّيْلِ

"the hours of the night"[75]

so he said: 'They are from its beginning period until dawn.'

He recited one day:

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُوا۟ سَلَٰمًا ﴿٦٣﴾

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth with composure, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace"[76]

Saying: 'These are the Muslims who are never rude, and when others are rude to them, they are patient and not hasty [to respond].' When he recited the verse:

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[74] *Al-Dhāriyāt* (51):17

[75] *Al-Muzammil* (73):6

#[76] *Al-Furqān* (25):63

وَكُلَّ إِنسَٰنٍ أَلْزَمْنَٰهُ طَٰٓئِرَهُۥ فِى عُنُقِهِۦ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُۥ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ كِتَٰبًا
يَلْقَىٰهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ ٱقْرَأْ كِتَٰبَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ ٱلْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

> "And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will spread open.[It will be said]: 'Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant."[77]

He then said: 'O son of Ādam! Just to you is the One who made you an accountant against yourself.' He also recited the verse:

لَّقَدْ أَحْصَىٰهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾

> "...We only count out to them a [limited] number."[78]

and said: 'At the end of the count is the last breath, at the end of the count is leaving the loved ones and children, at the end of the count is entering the grave, so hasten, O servants of Allāh, to doing good deeds.'

Then he added: 'O servants of Allāh, these are mere breaths. If they are halted, the good deeds with which you draw nearer to Allāh and upon which you depend will stop. Thus, may Allāh be merciful to one who held himself to account, feared his Lord and avoided disobeying him.'

He once recited the verse:

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[77] *Al-Isrā'* (17):13-14

[78] *Maryam* (19):94

كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ
جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَٰهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ

"... Every time their skins are roasted through We will replace them with other skins so they may taste the punishment ..."[79]

then his legs trembled, his tears flowed and he said: 'It is narrated that Hellfire eats their flesh seventy times each day, then it is told, 'Return' and it does. O Allāh! We seek refuge in you from Hellfire and from every deed that makes us worthy of Hellfire."

He recited the verse:

سَلَٰمٌ عَلَيْكُم بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى ٱلدَّارِ

"Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And excellent is the final home."[80]

and then said: 'They patiently forfeited the excesses of the worldly life and gave up the evanescent, so they attained the Hereafter and their end was a good one."

When he recited the verse:

وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُۥ كَنزٌ لَّهُمَا

"...and there was beneath it a treasure for them..."[81]

[79] *Al-Nisā'* (4:)56

[80] *Al-Ra'd* (13):24

[81] *Al-Kahf* (18):82

He said: 'It is narrated that Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) used to say: 'The treasure was a gold plate and a gold brick, inscribed thereon, 'In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful the Most Gracious. How strange is one who knows death and yet is able to rejoice, who knows Hellfire and yet is able to laugh, who knows the worldly life and its fluctuation with its residents and yet is able to feel safe and secure, who believes in fate (*qaḍā'*) and yet exhausts himself in pursuit of provision, and who believes in Hellfire and yet commits sins! There is no deity except Allāh. Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger.'[82]

He once recited the verse:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا ﴿٦٢﴾

> "And it is He who has made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude."[83]

Then he said: 'Glory is due to Allāh! How vast is the mercy of Allāh! How encompassing is His favour! How subtle is His creation! He gave whoever failed during the day another chance in the night, and whoever fell short during the night another chance in the day.'

He also recited the verse:

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[82] Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr*, 6/16 on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā*)

[83] *Al-Furqān* (25):62

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ
ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا۟ ۖ وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ
يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُۥ وَمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

> "And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured. And We destroyed [all] that Pharaoh and his people were producing and what they had been building."[84]

And then said: 'One marvels at the person who fears a king or avoids an oppressor after believing in this verse. By Allāh, if when people were tried they patiently endured their fate, Allāh would have removed their affliction. However, they feared the sword, so they were left alone as captives of fear. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of trials.'

He recited the verse:

تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ ٱلنَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَـٰلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

> "The Fire will sear their faces, and they therein will have taut smiles."[85]

And said: 'What a scene, O servants of Allāh! How horrible it is! Be wary of it. It is conveyed that the Fire will sear their face a sear that leaves no flesh or skin but causes it to fall off the ham-string, and that gives them taut smiles," then he wept and said: 'O Allāh! We seek refuge in you from the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination.'

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[84] *al-A'rāf* (7):137

[85] *al-Mu'minun* (23):104

He recited the verse:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ ٱلْكَلِمُ ٱلطَّيِّبُ وَٱلْعَمَلُ ٱلصَّٰلِحُ يَرْفَعُهُۥ

> "To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it."[86]

And said: 'When a person speaks good and enacts righteous deeds, Allāh Almighty, raises the speech with the deeds, and when he speaks good and enacts bad deeds, Allāh Almighty, rejects the speech with the deeds.'

He also recited the verse:

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا۟ إِلَّا
سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍۭ ۚ بَلَٰغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا ٱلْقَوْمُ ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

> "It will be—on the Day they see that which they are promised—as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day."[87]

Then said: 'Those who attained the worldly life through forbidden means, and then spent it excessively and wastefully in pursuit of pleasures.

وَسَيَعْلَمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَىَّ مُنقَلَبٍ يَنقَلِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

> "And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned."[88]

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[86] *Fāṭir* (35):10

[87] *al-Aḥqāf* (46):35

[88] *Al-Shu'rā'* (26):227

He also recited the verse:

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ مَا كُنتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ ﴿١٩﴾

> "And the intoxication of death will bring the truth; that is what you were trying to avoid..."[89]

So he said: 'Man is wicked in this worldly life, he tries to avoid when it's not time for avoiding and when escape or being absent is no longer possible.'

When he recited the verse:

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

> "It will be, on the Day they see it, as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof"[90]

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! It is only [like] an afternoon or a morning; can you not refrain from sinning [for that long]?'

When he recited the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا
غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

> "And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying: 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord,

[89] *Qāf* (50): 19

[90] *Al-Nāzi'āt* (79):46

indeed You are Kind and Merciful."[91]

And said: 'Those who came before were, by Allāh, people of compassion and mercy, but we are in a later generation that is like a scabby man's skin.' When he recited the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا
لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾

"And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate",[92]

he used to say: 'May Allāh show mercy to a person who earned his livelihood from good sources, spent moderately, and saved provision for the day of his utmost need." Then he would add: 'Direct your excess fortune, may Allāh be merciful to you, to where Allāh and His Messenger directed it, and put it where they put it, because those who came before you used to take little and buy their freedom from Allāh with excess.'

He recited the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوا وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

"And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful."[93]

And said: 'They enact the good deeds they do and they present

[91] *al-Ḥashr* (59):10

[92] *Al-Furqān* (25):67

[93] *al-Mu'minun* (23):60

charity while being afraid that this does not save them from Allāh's Punishment.'

When he recited the verse:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ فِى كَبَدٍ ﴿٤﴾

"We have certainly created man into hardship"[94]

He used to say: 'Woe to the son of Ādam! Allāh has not created another creation that suffers through living as much as he.'

When he recited the verse:

فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً

"We will surely cause him to live a good life",[95]

He used to say: 'We will grant him a living that he will find its pleasure in his heart.' It is also narrated that he said: 'We will grant him provision for which there is no punishment', then he would add: 'Every life is bitter for man, except his life in Paradise.'

When he recited the verse:

وَسْـَٔلْهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ ٱلْبَحْرِ

"And ask them about the town that was by the sea."[96]

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[94] *Al-Balad* (90):4

[95] *Al-Naḥl* (16):97

[96] *Al-A'rāf* (7):163

Until the end of the verse, he would say: 'A fish that Allāh forbade them to fish one day of the week[97] and allowed it for the rest of the week. The fish would come in abundance to them on the day it was forbidden, as a trial and a test of obedience, they playfully kept taking it and then stopping out of fear and obedience.

He added: 'Whenever one intended to commit this sin, he agreed with them (and reconciled) their intention, until they took it and ate it, by Allāh, the most destructive meal that people ever ate. They were called upon three times while asleep, and they were called, 'O people of the town!' The men, women and children woke up, and they were told, 'Be apes, despised,' and so they were.

By Allāh! The sanctity (*ḥurmah*) of a believing servant being killed unjustly is greater in Allāh's sight than every fish He created, but Allāh Almighty, made the Hour (of Judgement) an appointment [for due punishment] for some people:

وَٱلسَّاعَةُ أَدْهَىٰ وَأَمَرُّ

"and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter."[98]

He once recited the verses:

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ فَإِذَا هُم بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾

"Indeed, it will be but one shout[99] and suddenly they

[97] The story related to the children of Isra'īl who used to fish on their sabbath day, when they were forbidden to do so.

[98] *Al-Qamar* (54):46

[99] Lit: A loud screech or a scream.

will be [alert] upon the earth's surface"[100]

and:

إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَٰحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ خَٰمِدُونَ

"It was not but one shout, and immediately they were extinguished"[101]

And said: 'O people! The shout indicates anger. Whoever fears Allāh must be wary of His Anger.'

When he recited the verses:

هَٰذِهِۦ جَهَنَّمُ ٱلَّتِى يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

"This is Hell, which the criminals deny. They will go around between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree]",[102]

He used to say: 'O people! What do you think of standing on a day the extent of which is fifty thousand years, and after their throats were torn out of hunger, thirst and fear, they are sent to the Fire of Hell and scalding water! O Allāh, in You is safe harbour, refuge and asylum, and upon You is our dependence. Therefore, save us with Your mercy, from Your punishment, O Most Forgiving.'

When he recited the verse:

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[100] *Al-Nāzi'āt* (79):13-14

[101] *Yāsīn* (36):29

[102] *al-Raḥmān* (55):43-44

ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَٰشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

"They who are during their prayer humbly submissive"[103]

He used to say: 'May Allāh be merciful to people who are humble and submit their hearts, so they lower their gaze, guard their private parts, avoiding forbidden matters, thus attaining the highest of ranks.'

He was asked about the interpretation of the verse:

مَن جَآءَ بِٱلْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُۥ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا

"Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgement] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit]."[104]

So he said: 'Whoever came with, 'There is no deity except Allāh, alone, no partner has He, and Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger,' coming sincerely from his heart, then Allāh has Paradise for him.'

When he recited the verse:

هَلْ جَزَآءُ ٱلْإِحْسَٰنِ إِلَّا ٱلْإِحْسَٰنُ ﴿٦٠﴾

"Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"[105]

He said: 'The reward for whoever said: 'There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Allāh' is to enter Paradise.'

[103] *Al-Mu'minun* (23):2

[104] *al-An'ām* (6):160

[105] *Al-Raḥmān* (55):60

He recited the verse:

يَوۡمَ يَنظُرُ ٱلۡمَرۡءُ مَا قَدَّمَتۡ يَدَاهُ

> "On the Day when a man will observe what his hands have put forth."[106]

and said: 'Man is the careful, keen and astute believer who knows that he has an appointed time [for reward and punishment], so he puts forth good deeds, then he comes to find them and is delighted by them. It is also the Day when:

وَيَقُولُ ٱلۡكَافِرُ يَٰلَيۡتَنِي كُنتُ تُرَٰبَۢا ﴿٤٠﴾

> "The disbeliever will say: 'Oh, I wish that I were dust!'"'[107]

He once recited the verse:

كَلَّاۖ بَلۡۜ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُواْ يَكۡسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

> "No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning."[108]

and said: 'One sin after another, until the heart blackens and dies.'

He also recited the verse:

وَلَا تَمۡنُن تَسۡتَكۡثِرُ ﴿٦﴾

> "And do not confer favour to acquire more"[109]

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[106] *al-Nabā'* (78):40

[107] *al-Nabā'* (78): 40

#[108] *al-Mutaffifin* (83):14

and commented: 'Do not deem your deeds to be much, for you know not what was accepted thereof and what was rejected.'

He recited the verse:

أَلْهَىٰكُمُ ٱلتَّكَاثُرُ ۝١

"Competition in [worldly] increase diverts you"[110]

and said: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return. By Allāh, it has diverted attention away from the eternal Fire of Hell, and distracted from the unending pleasure (of Paradise).' Then he recited the verse:

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٤

"No! You are going to know"[111]

and said: 'O people! If a mortal creature threatened you, you wouldn't be able to sleep, so how about the threat of the King of kings, and the Ever-Living who does not die?'

When he used to pray *qiyam al-layl*[112] and reach this chapter, he could not go past it, and he would keep repeating it and weeping until his weeping ceases. May Allāh be merciful to him and pleased with him.

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[109] *al-Mudaththir* (74):6

[110] *al-Takathur* (102):1

[111] *al-Takathur* (102):4

[112] The voluntary night prayers

CHAPTER SEVEN

His Correspondence with Caliphs and Interactions with Leaders and Commanders

IT IS NARRATED THAT HE—may Allāh have mercy on him—used to say: 'Allāh the Exalted, took the covenant from the Caliphs, leaders and commanders in three matters; whoever from them fulfils the covenant of Allāh is saved, and whoever falls short is destroyed. He took their covenant not to follow their personal whims (*hawā*) and inclinations; not to fear the people and to only fear Him; and not to exchange His verses for a small price.'

When he spoke of the kings, he used to say: 'Do not look at the luxury of their lives and their affluent clothing, but look instead to the swiftness of their worldly departure and wretched return.'

He received news about one of them that he used to eat rough food and wear ragged clothes, so he said: 'Woe to him! Why then are taxes collected for him and are the vast lands owned by him?'

They said: 'He does that out of greed." He said: 'Praise is due to Allāh who deprived him of the worldly pleasures for which he forfeited his religion.'

He used to say: 'When Allāh intends ill for a people, he appoints foolish leaders over them, and puts their excess fortune in the hands of their stingy.'

He used to say: 'I heard from one of the Companions (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhum*) that he used to say: 'Among the signs of [the approach of] the Day of Judgement is that the Earth has wicked leaders, lying ministers, treacherous trustees, lecherous scholars and unjust commanders, and I fear that this turns out to be this age period of ours.'

It is said that Al-Nadr Ibn 'Amr, who was the commander of Basrah, summoned Al-Ḥasan one day and said to him: 'O Abū Saʿīd! Allāh the Exalted, created the worldly life and all it contains of clothing, pleasures and adornment for His servants, and He said:

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

"...eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."[113]

He also said:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ
الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

"Say: 'Who has forbidden the adornment of Allāh

[113] *Al-Aʿrāf* (7):31

> which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?' Say: 'They are for those who believe during the worldly life ...'"[114]

Al-Ḥasan said: 'O man! Fear Allāh in yourself, and beware the wishful thinking you take lightly or you will perish. No one is given of the goodness of this life or the Hereafter on account of his wishing. They are two (separate) lives, whoever works in this life attains the other one, and whoever neglects himself loses them both. Allāh Almighty, chose Muḥammad (ﷺ) for Himself, sent him with His Message and Mercy, made him a Messenger to all His Creation, sent down upon him a prevailing Book, set limits for him in the worldly life, and gave him a term therein. Then, He, the Exalted, said:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

> "There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern"[115]

and commanded us to obey him, take his guidance, follow his path and practice his Sunnah. What we accomplished thereof is by Allāh's Favour (*faḍl*) and Mercy (*raḥmah*), and when we fell short, we must ask for aid and forgiveness; this is the way to our salvation. As for wishful thinking, there is no good therein or in those who practice it.'

Al-Nadr then said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! Allāh, the Exalted, Has determined for us what He willed, and we do love our Lord.' Al-Ḥasan replied: 'Some people said that in the time of the Messenger(ﷺ),

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[114] *Al-A'rāf* (7):32

[115] *Al-Mumtaḥinah* (60):6

so Allāh Almighty, Revealed to him:

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ
فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Say: [O Muḥammad]: 'If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you....'"[116]

Therefore, He made following the Messenger (ﷺ) a proof of love, and disproved those who diverge from it. By Allāh! I have seen people who were in this place before you, who ascended pulpits, who had ambling horses dance for them, who dragged the tails of their robes insolently and to be seen by people; those who built palaces and preferred the worldly life and competed in their garments; they were [eventually] removed from power and deprived of what they gathered, and they came to their Lord and found their deeds. Therefore, woe to them, woe to them on the Day of Deprivation, and woe to them:

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ ٱلْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأُمِّهِۦ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾
وَصَٰحِبَتِهِۦ وَبَنِيهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ ٱمْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ﴿٣٧﴾

"On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father And his wife and his children, For every man, that Day, will be enough concern (of his own)."[117]

It is said that he entered upon him another day, so he said: 'O Governor! May Allāh aid you. Your [true] brother is the one who advises you concerning your religion, who makes you see your flaws and who guides you to the way of right conduct, and your

[116] *Āl-'Imrān* (3): 31

[117] *'Abasa* (80):34-37

[true] enemy is the one who deludes you and arouses desire in you.

O Governor! Fear Allāh, for you have deviated from the people (who preceded you) in course and manner, in openness and in secret whilst thinking wishfully [of salvation]. Thus, choose the way that is better.

People—may Allāh bless you—are divided into two groups: seekers of the worldly life and seekers of the Hereafter. By Allāh! The seeker of the Hereafter has attained [what he desires] and found comfort, while the other has been exhausted and deprived. Beware—O Governor—of seeking that which is quickly fading and leaving the eternal or you will be among the regretful.

As a wise man said:

Where are the kings who were mindless of their share (of the Hereafter)
Until they were made to drink from the glass of death

May Allāh shield us from decrease after increase, and from straying after guidance.

I was told, O Governor, of a pious man who used to say: 'It suffices as a crime for one to be a trustee for traitors and to assist them in their affairs.' Another poor person was told: 'Why do not you go to the Sultans and seek some of their benevolence?' He replied: 'I seek refuge in Allāh from what He despises; I prefer to die as a scrawny believer than to die as a fat hypocrite."

Ibn Hubayrah summoned Al-Ḥasan and Al-Sha'bī, and he said to them, 'May Allāh bless you! Amir ul-Mu'minin, Yazīd Ibn 'Abdu'l-Mālik, sends me letters [of decrees], in the implementation of what I am certain is condemned; if I obey him I fear the wrath of Allāh,

and if I disobey him, I do not feel secure from his power. What do you then think I should do?' Al-Ḥasan told Al-Shaʿbī: 'O Abū ʿAmr! Respond to the Governor.' He did so and was gentle in his response, and thereafter lost Ibn Hubayrah's regard.

Ibn Hubayrah was not satisfied until he heard Al-Ḥasan's reply, so he asked: 'Give me your opinion, O Abū Saʿīd!' Al-Ḥasan said: 'Did not Al-Shaʿbī state his view?' Ibn Hubayrah said: 'I want to hear yours.' He said: 'I say: By Allāh, an angel of Allāh's angels—harsh and severe—who do not disobey Allāh's Commands, will soon come to you to take you away from your vast palace to your narrow grave, where Ibn ʿAbdu'l-Mālik will not avail you against Allāh at all.' 'Umar Ibn Hubayrah wept intensely, and rewarded Al-Ḥasan generously while restricting Al-Shaʿbi's reward.

Then Al-Shaʿbī went to the *masjid*, and when his council gathered, he said: 'O people! Whomever of you is able to prefer Allāh, the Exalted, to His creation should do so. The Governor, Ibn Hubayrah, summoned Al-Ḥasan and me; and by Allāh, Al-Ḥasan knew nothing that I did not, but I made allowance for Ibn Hubayrah, desired to please him and held back in my answer to him, so Allāh dismissed me and sent me away. While Al-Ḥasan was with Allāh, the Exalted, so Allāh brought him closer and subjected Ibn Hubayrah [to him] so he preferred him and conferred upon him.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan left Ibn Hubayrah's council one day, when he found the Qur'ān reciters at door (on his way out), so he asked: 'What brought you here? May Allāh disperse your gathering; you want to enter upon these scabby people? By Allāh, their fellowship is not a fellowship with the pious, nor is their councils the councils of the virtuous. Disperse! May Allāh separate your souls from your bodies! May Allāh decrease the likes of you among Muslims! You have put your shoes on, tucked your clothes, shaved your heads and

darkened your eyes with kohl, so becoming the worst of people! You shaved your moustaches out of greed; you are a disgrace to the reciters of the Qur'ān, may Allāh not arrange your affairs.

However, by Allāh, if you abstain from what they have, they would desire what you have. May Allāh banish whom He wills, and I do not think it will be anyone other than you," and then he left angrily.

It is narrated that Al-Ḥajjāj built a house in Wasit and summoned Al-Ḥasan to see it. When he entered it, he said: 'Praise is due to Allāh. Kings see glory for themselves, while we see lessons in them every day. One of them goes to build a palace, then furnishes and upholster it. Clothing to adorn rides, then he is surrounded by greedy wolves, fire moths and evil companions, so he says, 'Look at what I did.' We have seen, O fool. What then, O most wicked of the wicked? The residents of the Heaven detest you, and the residents of the Earth curse you. You have built a house that will disappear and you have vandalised the house of eternity. You have glorified the house of delusion in order to be humiliated in the house of [eternal] pleasure.' He then left while saying: 'Glory is due to Him! He took the covenant of scholars to clarify it to people and not conceal it.'

Al-Ḥajjāj heard what Al-Ḥasan said: so he became very angry, gathered the people of the Levant and said: 'I am insulted by that slave of Baṣrah in your presence and you did not disapprove?' He then summon Al-Ḥasan, who came while moving his lips inaudibly, until he entered upon Al-Ḥajjāj. He asked him: 'O Abū Saʿīd! Did you have no consideration for my government over you when you said what you did?' He said: 'May Allāh be merciful to you, O Governor! Whoever scares you until you reach safety is kinder to you and should be dearer to you than whoever reassures

you until you reach your destruction. My intention was not what you bore to mind. Both matters are in your hand: forgiveness and punishment. Do what is more appropriate for you, and I depend on Allāh; He is sufficient for us and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.' Thereupon, Al-Ḥajjāj felt ashamed, apologised to him and conferred upon him generously.

It is said that a crafty member of the police came to Al-Ḥasan and said: 'I intend to give up drinking of wine." Al-Ḥasan said: 'Give up what is more pressing... until it becomes your most evil deed; repent from it then.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan heard a man from Al-Ḥajjāj's entourage speaking ill of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), so he said: 'He [implying the man] has become worthy of it.' The man said: 'Hellfire, O Abū Sa'īd?' He said: 'Yes! And wretched is the destination.' He said: 'Should I repent, may Allāh bless you?' Al-Ḥasan said: 'Woe to you! Do you have the power to endure Allāh's punishment if you do not repent? Indeed, Allāh loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.'

It is said that when Ibn Artāh was appointed as the governor of Baṣrah, he intended to appoint Al-Ḥasan in charge of the judiciary, so Al-Ḥasan ran away into hiding and wrote to him:

'O Governor! The one who hates a matter is unfit to bear its responsibility. Whoever performs a job unwillingly is not worthy of being supported [by Allāh] in it. The people who chose this matter suffice you, and your turning to them and their dependence on you is better for you and in the best interest of your affairs. There is no good in seeking the help of someone who does not believe in the necessity of the matter to which he is invited, or in his obligation to perform it. Therefore, relieve me, O Governor,

may Allāh relieve you, and be kind to me by ceasing to pursue me [in this regard], for Allāh will not allow the reward of anyone who did well in deeds to be lost.'

Thereupon, the Govenor relieved him, treated him generously and said: 'By Allāh, I was never to inflict him with what he hates.'

It is narrated that 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz—may Allāh be merciful to him—wrote to Al-Ḥasan saying: 'Write an admonition for me, O Abū Sa'īd, and be brief,' so he wrote back saying:

'Know—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—that patience, even if you taste its initial bitterness, how excellent is its late sweetness! Be aware, O Amir Al-Mu'minin, that successful is the one who ensures safety in the life of eternity, who attains [Allāh's] Mercy and is let into Paradise.'

It is also said that 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz wrote to Al-Ḥasan stating: 'Write to me, O Abū Sa'īd, in disparagement of the worldly life,'' so he wrote back saying:

'O Amir Al-Mu'minīn! The worldly life is a place of movement and transition, and not a place of residence and stability. Ādam was sent to it as punishment, so be wary of it, for the one who desires it is bound to leave it, the rich therein is poor, and the happiest of its residents are those who ignore it. When examined by the intelligent and wise, he'll find that it humiliates whoever glorifies it and scatters whoever collects it. It is like poison consumed by whoever does not know it, and desired by whoever is ignorant of it, while it is, by Allāh, the death of him.

Be aware—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—that its wishes are fake, its hopes are false, its (perceived) serenity is disturbance and its liv-

ing is vexation. The one who leaves it is successful, and the one who clings to it is bound for destruction and drowning. The clever wise person is the one who fears what Allāh scares him with, takes warning of what Allāh warned him against, and puts forth (his deeds) from the place of evanescence to the place of eternity; upon death, certainty will come to him.

The worldly life, by Allāh—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—is a dream, and it is a place of punishment. The one who lacks intelligence collects for it, and the one who lacks knowledge is deluded by it. The resolute wise man is the one who lives in it like the one treating his wound, he endures the bitterness of the medicine for the wellness he seeks and the wretched consequence he fears.

The worldly life, by Allāh—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—is a dream, the Hereafter is the awakening, between them is death, and people are a blend of false dreams. I will tell you what the wise man said:

If you survive it, you're saved from a great calamity
Otherwise, I see no salvation for you

When his letter reached 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz, he wept and sobbed until his companions felt sorry for him, and he said: 'May Allāh be merciful to Al-Ḥasan. He still wakes us from our sleep, and rouses us from negligence. By Allāh, what a sincere compassionate man he is! What a truthful and eloquent admonisher he is!'

'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz later wrote to him: 'Your useful admonitions have arrived and healed. You have described the worldly life accurately! The wise is one who's wary therein. It is as if everyone destined to die among its inhabitants has already died. May the

peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh be upon you.'

When his letter reached Al-Ḥasan, he said: 'May Allāh reward Amir Al-Mu'minīn; a speaker of truth and an acceptor of advice. Allāh has conferred a great blessing by his reign, shown mercy to the ummah through his rule, and made him a blessing and a mercy.'

He then wrote back to him: 'The greatest calamity and the demanded affair (of rulership) lies before you, and you must see it through, either safely or with damage.'

He also wrote to him—may Allāh be merciful to him—that: 'Beware, O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—to be in the dominion that Allāh granted you over His servants—like a slave whose master put his trust in him and entrusted his money and children to him, so he wasted the money, sent the children away, impoverished the master's family and destroyed his wealth.

Be aware—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—that Allāh, Glorified is He, Commanded His Prophets to discourage His servants from evil deeds and forbid them from immoralities... I remind you, O Amir Al-Mu'minīn, of the scarcity of your companions before your Lord, and your supporters on the Day of your gathering. Therefore, seek provision for the Day of the Greatest Terror.

Know—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—that you have a house besides the one in which you live, and in which your residence will extend,[118] and at whose door your loved ones will part with you; they will throw you therein alone, and give you up to its isolation. Prepare therefore—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—for the Day a man will flee from his brother, his mother, his father, his wife and his children. Remember when the contents of the graves are scattered and what is the breasts is obtained, when the secrets are exposed, and

when the book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it, is published. Thus, work now while you have time before the time comes and the deeds are suspended. Beware—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—to judge among the servants of Allāh with the judgement of the ignorant, or to take them into the way of the wrongdoers. Do not give the arrogant power over the weak, for they do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection.

It is narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever appointed an oppressor or assisted him has turned his back on Islām."[119] Fear Allāh and do not carry your sins as well as the sins of others, nor bear your burdens alongside the burdens of others. Do not be deluded by those who bask in your misery, and who eat pleasures by exhausting yours. Do not look—O Amir al-Mu'minīn—to your fate today, but look to your destiny tomorrow, when you are captured in the snares of death and standing before your Lord in the presence of the Angels and the Prophets, when all faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence.

O Amir Al-Mu'minīn, while I did not reach in my admonition, what those with intelligence did, I did not spare you any compassion, withhold from you any advice, or fall short in my preaching. Therefore, give my letter its due attention and dedicate yourself to hearing it as one who seeks to benefit from it does. Endure the bitterness of the medicine for the sake of the wellness you seek. May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh be upon you.'

He also wrote to him: 'O Amir Al-Mu'minīn, fear Allāh as much

[118] Meaning the grave.

[119] A source reference for this narration was unable to be located.

as He wants you to fear Him, and he will avail you against the fear of people. Take provision from what you have to what lies ahead, and you will prosper, and upon death certainty will come to you'

'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz wrote to him once: 'Write to me—O Abū Sa'īd—describing the just ruler, where he is and how can the ummah attain him.'

Al-Ḥasan wrote back saying: 'O Amir Al-Mu'minīn! May Allāh allow you to revel in the meadows of His blessing and wonder in the gardens of His making. Be aware that Allāh, the Exalted, made the just ruler as an adjuster for every inclined one, a moderator over the excessive ones, a reformer for the corrupt, a strength for all the weak ones, a fairness for those oppressed, and a refuge for all those who call for help.

The just ruler is like the kind shepherd, and the gentle firm man who frequents for his sheep, the best grasslands and keeps them away from the lands of destruction; protects them from beasts of prey and shields them from the harm of heat and coldness.

The just ruler is like the father who cares for his children; he strives for them at an early age and teaches them at old age, provides for them during his life and saves for them after death.

[He is also] like the compassionate, gentle and beneficent mother; she carried her child with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship; she is sleepless when he is, and she rests when he does; she breastfeeds him for some time and weans him another time; she rejoices in his wellness and is concerned with his dissatisfaction.

The just ruler is like the guardian of the orphan, and the store-

keeper of the poor; he brings up their young and supplies their old. The just ruler is like the heart amidst the organs, they are healthy when it is, and they are corrupt when it is.

The just ruler stands between Allāh and His servants; he hears the Words of Allāh and relays them [to his subjects], he hears the effects of Allāh's blessings and he shows them [to his subjects], and he follows the Commands of Allāh and leads his subjects.

I hope—O Amir Al-Mu'minīn—that by the Will of Allāh you are such. Had advising you not been obligatory, I would be in no need of admonishing you—due to the guidance that Allāh has granted you and the rightness and soundness He has given you. However, Allāh the Exalted took a covenant from scholars to make it clear to the people and not conceal it."

Section One:
Rebellion against Rulers

Ḥumayd—Al-Ḥasan's servant—said: 'I was with Al-Ḥasan one day when a man came to him and sat with him in private and consulted him regarding rebelling with Ibn Al-Ash'ath against Al-Ḥajjāj, so he said: 'Fear Allāh, O my nephew, and do not do it, for it is forbidden and not allowed.' I said to him, 'May Allāh bless you! I have known that you thought poorly of Al-Ḥajjāj and were not satisfied with his way.' He said: 'O Abū'l-Ḥasan! By Allāh, today I think worse of him and I am more reproaching and disparaging of him. Be aware however—may Allāh bless you—that the tyranny of rulers is indignation from Allāh Almighty. The displeasure of Allāh is not fought with swords, but is avoided through supplication, repentance and renouncing of sins. When the fury of Allāh is met with the sword, it [the fury] becomes more incisive. Mālik

Ibn Dinār told me that Al-Ḥajjāj used to say: "Know that whenever you commit a sin, Allāh causes punishment through your Sultān."

I was told that someone said to Al-Ḥajjāj: 'You are doing such and such to the ummah of the Messenger (ﷺ). He said: 'Yes. I am but a punishment for the people of Iraq for what they did to their religion and what they ignored of their Prophet's (ﷺ) teachings.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan heard a man praying for the destruction of Al-Ḥajjāj, so he said: 'Do not do that, may Allāh be merciful to you. This is the result of your own doing. We fear, if Al-Ḥajjāj is removed, that apes and pigs as replacement in their place. It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Your rulers are correspondent to your deeds. How you are, so shall your rulers will be in accordance with that."

I heard that someone wrote to a pious man complaining of injustice of governors, so he wrote back saying: 'My brother! I received your letter that states the governors' injustice you are suffering. Whoever commits the sin has no right to complain of the punishment. I do not think what you are going through except the ill consequence of your sins. Peace be upon you."

I also heard that Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger (ﷺ) and said: 'O people! I have heard the Messenger (ﷺ) say: 'Allāh the Exalted and Praised, said: "I am Allāh; there is no deity except Me. The hearts of kings are in My hand. Whosoever obeys Me among you, I will make them a mercy to him, and whosoever disobeys me, I will make them a scourge upon him. Do not occupy yourselves with revilement

of the kings; repent to Me and I will make them kind to you.'"[120]

Al-Ash'ath said: 'I was with Al-Ḥasan when a man entered upon him who was of pale complexion as if he was from Bahrain.[121] He said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! I want to ask you about rulers.' Al-Ḥasan said: 'Ask what you wish.' He said: 'What is your opinion of our leaders?' Al-Ḥasan was quiet for a while and then said: 'What can I say about them when they are in charge of five of our affairs: Friday prayers, congregational [prayers], the spoils [of battle], the frontiers borders and the legal penal code (*ḥudūd*)? By Allāh, the affairs of the religion cannot be upright without them, even if they were cruel or unjust. By Allāh, Allāh rectifies through them more than what they corrupt. By Allāh, obeying them is a blessing and rebelling against them is blasphemy.'

The man said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! By Allāh, I have a lot of wealth and I do not wish to have it multiplied for the price of not hearing what I just heard from you. May Allāh reward you abundantly on behalf of the religion and its people.'

Al-Ḥasan was asked about Al-Ḥajjāj, so he said: 'He recites the Book of Allāh, admonishes with the admonishing of the pious, feeds the poor, prefers the truth and he strikes the striking of

[120] Similar variations of the narration are found in: Al-Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* #8962; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā'*, 2/388 [441]; Ibn Abī Shaybah, #34218 and Ibn Mundhirī, *Al-Targhīb wa'l-Tarhīb*, #792. The chain of transmission is very weak—see *Silsilat Al-Ḍa'īfah*, #602 for overall verdict of soundness.

[121] Eastern Arabia was historically known as Bahrain until the 18th century. This region stretched from the south of Basrah along the Persian Gulf coast and included the modern day regions of Bahrain, Kuwait, Al-Hasa, Qatif, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Southern Iraq, and Northern Oman. The entire coastal strip of Eastern Arabia was known as *"Bahrain"* for ten centuries.

tyrants.'

They asked: 'What do you say about rebelling against him?' He said: 'Fear Allāh and repent to Him and He will avail you against his tyranny, and know that Allāh has from the likes of Al-Ḥajjāj.'

He also used to say: 'These [kings], even if the ambles danced beneath them and people treaded behind them, the humility of sin is in their hearts. However, Allāh obligated us to obey them, forbade us to rebel against them, and commanded us to avoid their harm by repentance and supplication. Whomever Allāh intends well for will adhere to that, exercise it and not deviate from it.'

CHAPTER EIGHT

Admonitions and Wise Sayings Regarding Other Matters

HE—MAY ALLĀH HAVE MERCY on him—used to say: 'The [true] admonisher is the one who admonishes people with his own actions, not his words.'

Such was his manner; if he wanted to enjoin something, he started by doing it himself, and if he wished to forbid something, he refrained from it foremost.

He used to say: 'It came to my knowledge that some pious man made a vow Allāh will not see him laughing until he knows what his residence will be: Paradise or Hellfire?' Al-Ḥasan added: 'He made a covenant—may Allāh be merciful to him—and he fulfilled it. He was not seen laughing until he passed away to his Lord, the Exalted.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan passed by a man who was laughing, so he said: 'O my nephew! Have you already passed the bridge (*ṣirāṭ*)?'

He said: 'No.' He said: 'Do you already know whether you are going to Paradise or Hellfire?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'So why the laughter—may Allāh bless you—when the matter is so grave?' It is said that this man was not seen laughing ever again until he died.

Al-Ḥasan saw some people laughing, exchanging derisive glances and bantering after prayers (*fajr*) on the day of *'Īd al-Fiṭr*, so he said: 'O people! Allāh Almighty made the month of Ramaḍān a course for His servants to race, through worship, towards the Mercy of Allāh, and to work diligently to attain His Paradise. Some people surpassed and were successful, while others fell short and were unsuccessful. One marvels at the one who laughs on the day when the doers of good win and the falsifiers lose.

By Allāh, if the (Divine) veil was removed, every doer of good and every doer of evil would be distracted with their deeds from renewing their clothes and combing their hair.

If you—may Allāh aid you—are certain that your efforts were accepted and your good deeds were raised, then this is not the doing of the grateful, and if you are not certain, then this is not the doing of the fearful.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Reduce your laughter, for the abundance of laughter kills the heart, removes grace, takes manliness away and degrades the person.'

He also used to say: 'It is narrated that Allāh, the Exalted, revealed to 'Īsā (*'alayhis-salām*), 'O 'Īsā! Adorn your eyes with crying whenever you see the unaware laughing."

Al-Ḥasan went to visit a patient and he found him in the pangs of death and saw his restlessness and sufferings. When he returned

to his home, they presented food to him, but he said: 'Keep your food and drinks to yourself. I saw a death of which there is no escape for me, and I will keep preparing for it until I meet it," and he refrained from eating for some days until he was pitied and given food to eat.

He also used to say: 'Allāh Almighty did not make an end date for your deeds except death. Therefore, take persistence as your ally, as He said:

وَٱعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ ٱلْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

> "And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death)."[122]

He used to say: 'I was a contemporary of seventy Companions who partook in the Battle of Badr; if you saw them you would call them mad, and if they saw the pious among you, they would say: 'These have no share [of the Hereafter], and if they saw your wickedness, they would say: 'These do not believe in the Day of Account.'

He also used to say: 'May Allāh have mercy on a man who observed and pondered, after he pondered he took warning, after he took warning he had insight, and after he had insight he endured.'

Some people had insight but did not endure and impatience took their hearts, so they neither reached their goals nor returned to what they left, and they lost [this] world and the Hereafter. Such is the manifest loss.'

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[122] *al-Ḥijr* (15):99

He also used to say: 'O people! I admonish you, but I am not the best or the most righteous among you. I have transgressed against myself, have not been strict with it and have not forced it to perform the appropriate worship of Allāh. However, if one could not admonish his brother until he perfects his own matters, no admonisher or reminder will exist, and no one will remain who invites to Allāh the Exalted, nor enjoins His obedience or forbids His disobedience. Nevertheless, the gathering of the insightful and the believers reminding of one another contain revival of the hearts of the pious, awakening from negligence and protection from forgetfulness. Thus, adhere, may Allāh bless you, to the councils of remembrance of Allāh (*adhkār*), for a word may be heard and being looked down upon may be beneficial:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

> "O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him]."[123]

O people! By Allāh, you have woken up to find your life-span reduced, your deeds counted and guarded, death above your heads and Hellfire ahead of you. O people! Each of you has but one soul; if it is saved from the punishment of Allāh, it would not care who perished, and if it perished, it would not care who is saved. Avoid procrastination, may Allāh bless you, for it destroyed those before you. You have no idea when your time (of death) will come and where your destination will be. May Allāh be merciful to a man who prepared for his day before his provisions run out.'

[123] *Āl-'Imrān* (3):102

He also said: 'O people! Allāh the Exalted, opened a scroll for you and appointed for each of you two noble Angels; one on his right and one on his left. He Watches over them; He decreases increases as He wills. He is dictating a book that:

لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّآ أَحْصَىٰهَا وَوَجَدُوا۟ مَا عَمِلُوا۟ حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٩﴾

"Leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it? And they will find what they did present [before them]. And your Lord does injustice to no one."[124]

It is narrated that when this verse was revealed to the Messenger (ﷺ):

مَن يَعْمَلْ سُوٓءًا يُجْزَ بِهِۦ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُۥ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾

"Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allāh a protector or a helper."[125]

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'By Allāh! The crusher of backs was revealed.' If Abū Bakr—who is promised Paradise—said that, what should the rest of us say? Take warning—O believers—and be wary so that you are safe from the punishment of a terrible Day.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Beware being deluded, for you have not received a guarantee of security from Allāh. The greatest terror and the gravest matter lies before you, and you must lay your head in your grave on what you put forth, whether

[124] *Al-Kahf* (19):49

[125] *al-Nisā'* (4):123

good or evil. Thus, take the initiative during the time of ease, and beware of procrastinating of deeds. You are going to be held to account, so prepare your answers.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! The believer does not wake up except in fear, even if he is a doer of good, and he cannot be otherwise, because he lies between two fears: a past sin which he knows not what Allāh will do about it, and a life that remains of which he knows not how Allāh is going to try him in it. May Allāh have mercy on a man who pondered and took warning, contemplated and saw, and prevented the soul from unlawful inclination.

O son of Ādam! Allāh—the Exalted—commanded obedience, assisted in its performance and left no excuse for leaving it. He forbade disobedience, disavowed it and gave no leeway in committing it. It is reported that Allāh—the Exalted—will say to Ādam (*'alayhi as-salām*) on the Day of Judgement, 'O Ādam! Today you are the judge between Me and your descendants. Whatever good outweighs his evil by an atom's weight shall enter Paradise, so that you know I do not punish except the transgressors.'

He used to say: 'There is no valley; chain or bind in Hellfire except the name of its owner is written on it according to the Judgement. What if—O people—all these came together for a man? Fear Allāh O people, and be wary of His hatred; the hatred of Allāh [for the disbelievers] is greater, if they only knew.'

It is said that Al-Ḥasan came to his companions one day when they were gathered. He remarked: 'By Allāh, if one of you were living in the time of the early generation[126] and saw what I saw of those Muslims, he would wake up anxious and go to sleep distressed, he would realise that the diligent among you is like

the trifler [among them], and the hard-worker among you is like the slacker. If I were satisfied with myself, I would not admonish you, but Allāh knows that I am not satisfied, which is why I hate it for you.

O people! There are worshippers of Allāh who worship Him as if they saw the residents of Paradise enjoying therein and the residents of Hellfire suffering therein, so they work for the sake of the pleasure they seek and they refrain to avoid the painful punishment they fear.

O people! There are worshippers of Allāh whose hearts are aggrieved, whose evil is felt secure of, whose desires are restrained... They endured the few days (of the world) for the sake of what they hope in the long run. During the night, they are up on their feet, humbling themselves to their Lord and strive to free themselves [from His punishment]; out of fear, their tears run and their hearts beat. During the day, they are wise, knowledgeable, pious and invisible. An ignorant [person] would think them to be self-sufficient because of their restraint, you would think them to be ill because of their fear, yet no illness has befallen them—but they are frequently exposed to the mention of Hellfire and its terrors. By Allāh, they are less interested in what is lawful for them than you are in what is unlawful to you. Their hearts were insightful of their religion than your sights are for your worldly matters. They were more afraid for their good deeds not being accepted than you are to be punished for your sins:

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ حِزْبُ ٱللَّهِۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

"Those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the

[126] Meaning the time of the Companions (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhum*).

party of Allāh—they are the successful."[127]

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do not be fooled by the innocent-looking animals of prey that surround you: your son, your wife, your servant and your relatives.

As for your son, he is like the lion; contesting with you over what you have.

As for your wife, she is like the an ogling female hound.

As for your servant, he is like the cunning fox in thievery.

As for your family, by Allāh, a *dirham* that reaches them after your death is more preferable for them than you freeing a slave. Therefore, beware of exhausting yourself for their interest solely. They are there for you during your numbered days, but after they put you in your grave, they leave you behind, buy new clothing, play tambourines and laugh loudly. All the while, you are being held to account for what is [now] in their hands. Thus, put forth for yourself on:

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ
مِن سُوٓءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُۥٓ أَمَدًۢا بَعِيدًا ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ
ٱللَّهُ نَفْسَهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾

"The Day every soul will find what it has done of good present [before it] and what it has done of evil, it will wish that between itself and that [evil] was a great distance. And Allāh warns you of Himself, and Allāh is Kind to [His] servants."[128]

[127] *Al-Mujadillah* (58):22

O people! If one of you is warned by his friend from something, he heeds the warning and avoids it, so how about him, who's Lord warned him of Himself and frightened him of His punishment? Allāh Almighty said:

أَفَأَمِنُوا۟ مَكْرَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا
ٱلْقَوْمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

> "Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allāh? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allāh except the losing people."[129]

He also used to say: 'Are you not astonished by someone who trifles, neglects, jokes and plays around while he is walking between Paradise and Hellfire, knowing not to which of them he is going towards?'

It is conveyed that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Allāh Almighty disapproves for you tempering in prayers, sexual relations while fasting and laughter in graveyards."[130]

He also used to say: 'Glory is due to Him who gave the virtuous a taste of the sweetness of devotion and servitude to Him in a way that tied their resolve to His remembrance, and emptied their hearts from anyone besides Him, so that nothing is dearer to them than silent supplication to Him, nothing is more pleasing to them than serving Him, and nothing is easier on their tongues than mentioning Him. Exalted is He and high above what the

[128] *Āl-'Imrān* (3):30

[129] *Al-A'rāf* (7):99

[130] See Al-Albānī: *Ḍa'īf al-Jāmi'*, #1631

transgressors say by great sublimity.'

He also used to say: 'It is narrated that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to light fire, bring his hand close to it and say: 'Look, O Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, how can you endure the Hellfire, and how can you withstand the wrath of the Compeller.' Then he would ask Allāh for refuge from Hellfire and the deeds of its inhabitants.'

Al-Ḥasan would add: 'If that was the fear of 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) when he was among those promised Paradise, so how can you feel safe, O people?'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You are but a guest; the guest is bound to depart and return, and the return is to Allāh. May Allāh reward some people who looked with the eye of the truth and put forth for the life of eternity.'

He also used to say: 'Whenever a new day arrives upon the son of Ādam, it calls out, 'O son of Ādam! I am a new day and a witness to your deeds; if I leave you, I will never return to you, so put forth what you wish and you will find it, and delay what you wish and it will never come back to you.'

He also used to say: 'Those who honour you only do so as long as your soul is within your body; when it is taken away, they will throw you away behind their backs, and if you are left amidst them (as a corpse), they will run away from you like they run away from a lion.'

He also used to say: 'Judge people by their actions and leave their words, for Allāh the Exalted, did not leave a speech except made for it evidence either to confirm or deny it. Whenever you

hear a good speech, observe its speaker carefully. If his actions conform to his words, that is the best, and if they contradict one another, do not be fooled by him, for his words are nothing but tricks for the passersby.'

He also used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You have words and deeds, and your deeds are worthier [of improvement] than your words. You have a state of secrecy and publicity, and your state of secrecy is worthier [of improvement] than your state of publicity. You have an immediate life and an afterlife, and your Hereafter is more entitled [to improvement] than your immediate one.'

O son of Ādam! Allāh—the Exalted—said:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ ٱلْكَلِمُ ٱلطَّيِّبُ وَٱلْعَمَلُ ٱلصَّٰلِحُ يَرْفَعُهُۥ

> "To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it."[131]

Therefore, do good deeds—may Allāh aid you—and you will find its result.

It is said that while Al-Ḥasan was in the *masjid* one day, he took a deep sigh and wept intensely, until his knees trembled and his heart beat strongly. He said: 'If the hearts had been alive and had righteousness in them, it would have cried [out of fear] of a night succeeded by the Day of Judgement. Did the people hear of any day, O servants of Allāh, in which there are more exposed private parts or teary eyes than that one?'

He also used to say: 'Whenever an eye is soaked in tears out of fear of Allāh, Allāh will forbid Hellfire to touch its body, and if

[131] *Fāṭir* (35):10

the tears flowed along the cheek, no darkness nor humiliation will cover that face. Every deed has a weight and a reward, except the tear out of fear of Allāh, for it extinguishes the heat of Hellfire as much as Allāh wills. If a man cried out of fear of Allāh, I would hope that Allāh Almighty bestows His Mercy upon that entire nation.'

He used to say: 'Allāh—the Exalted—does not impose a price on the servant for the knowledge he learns except the fee taken by the teacher. Whoever learns knowledge with a full sense of the rights of Allāh therein and in order to seek the rewards from Allāh, is successful, and whoever learns it for other than Allāh is cut off, and it will not let him reach Allāh Almighty.'

He also used to say: 'How poor is the son of Ādam! How weak he is! Hidden (from him) are his defects and concealed (from him) is his lifespan. He can be harmed by a bug and killed by a choke. Every day he takes a step closer to the Hereafter and traverses a stage of the worldly life. Yet, he is prone to transgression, showing off, oppressing and becoming a tyrant.'

Al-Ḥasan once attended a funeral, and then he remarked: 'O people! Work in preparation for this day,

فَسَيَرَى ٱللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ
وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَٰلِمِ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

"...and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers, and you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do."[132]

He also used to say: 'O people! Make use of your health and free time, and hasten to righteous deeds before a Day comes when the hearts and eyes will turn about in fear.'[133]

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do not fear a person of power, for he is a servant to your Lord; do not look greedily to a person of fortune, for you only eat from the provision of your Lord; do not befriend a criminal, for he will bring you ill consequences; do not belittle a poor person, for he is a brother to you.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! Do not belittle any good deed, even if it was little in your heart and sight. Allāh Almighty accepts an atom's weight of good deeds, and rewards the moments [of obedience]; if you knew its rank in the sight of your Lord, you would be content. On the other hand, do not belittle any sin, even if it was little in your heart and sight, for your Lord is severe in penalty.'

He once attended a council where the old and young attended, so he said: 'O elder people! What happens to the crop when it ripens?' They said: 'It is harvested.' Then, he turned and said: 'O young people! How many crops were taken by blight and destroyed and ruined prematurely?' Then he wept and recited the verse:

وَيَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

"And Allāh presents examples for the people that

[132] *Al-Taubah* (9):105

[133] The original text translates to *"stare in horror"*, but I think that verb does not befit the *'heart'*. It helps to refer to [14:42] and [24:37] to understand this point.

perhaps they will be reminded."[134]

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You die alone, resurrected alone and held into account alone.'

O son of Ādam! If all people obeyed Allāh and you disobeyed Him, their obedience would not benefit you, and if they disobeyed Allāh and you obeyed Him, their disobedience would not harm you.

O son of Ādam! Cling to your religion, for it is your flesh and blood. If your religion is sound, your flesh and blood are sound, and if it was the other way round, ask Allāh for refuge from it, for it is a fire that does not go out, a body that does not decay, and a soul that does not die.

He also used to say: 'The person is safe as long as he has an admonisher within himself and pondering was among his action, remembrance (*dhikr*) was his routine, and holding himself to account was his habit. On the other hand, he remains unsafe as long as he procrastinates, follows his whims, becomes unaware and thinks wishfully.'

It is narrated that Al-Ḥasan—may Allāh have mercy on him—received news that Makhūl had passed away, so he grieved and prayed for his mercy, and then he learned that this news was false, so he wrote to him saying:

'O Abū 'Abdullāh! May Allāh bring good to you and me in life and in death. Grant you and us the good of this life and the Hereafter, and facilitate the good consequence for you and us.

[134] *Ibrāhīm* (14):25

We received news about you that shocked us, and then we learned of its falsity. By Allāh, how happy we were, although that which caused our happiness is not eternal and the course of actions will inevitably lead to the former news. Are you - may Allāh bless you, aid you and us to the good deeds - like a man who tasted death and witnessed what lies beyond it. Then asked for return and was granted it. Given what he asked for after he saw what lies ahead, so he alertly sought to prepare himself to the life of eternity, believing that he has no fortune except what he put forward, and no deeds except what was accepted from him? Peace be upon you.'

He used to say: 'It is narrated that 'Īsā (*'alayhis-salām*) said to the disciples: 'Work for the sake of Allāh, and not for your stomachs. Birds do not cultivate or harvest, they go out in the morning without any provision, and Allāh provides for them. If you said that your stomachs are larger than theirs, these creatures are animals that do not cultivate or harvest, they have no provision, and Allāh provides for them.'

He used to say: 'Whoever asks Allāh's forgiveness thrice after the prayers (*fajr*), his sins are forgiven, even if he had fled from war.'

He also used to say: 'It is reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By the one in whose hand is my soul, none shall enter Paradise except the merciful.' They said: 'All of us are merciful, O Allāh's Messenger!' He said: 'Not the mercy to one's self, children and close ones, but to the general public,' and he raised his voice in that last part."[135]

He also used to say: 'It is narrated that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Should I tell you about the best of

[135] Al-Ḥākim, #7310 and Al-Haythamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, 8/189. It is a sound narration.

people?' They said: 'Yes, O Amir Al-Mu'minīn!' He said: 'Those who live a long life and whose deeds are good, whose kindness is hoped for and whosever evil is not feared.' Then he said: 'Should I tell you about the worst of people?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Those who live a long life and whose deeds are wicked, whose kindness is not hoped for and whose evil is feared.'

He used to say: 'If a man learned an aspect of [religious] knowledge and applied it, it would be better for him than having the entire worldly life and putting it in for sake of his Hereafter.'

It is said that he saw some people not used to napping during the midday, so he said: 'Why do not these people take a nap? I think poorly of their night.'

He also used to say: 'Refresh these hearts, for they are quick to die. Discipline these souls, for they are ambitious, and if you do not restrain them, they will take you to the most evil of destination.'

He was asked: 'O Abū Sa'īd! What do you say about the intercession [on the Day of Judgement]; is it true?' He said: 'Yes.' He was asked: 'Allāh the Exalted, said:

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَخْرُجُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ وَمَا هُم بِخَٰرِجِينَ مِنْهَا

> "They will wish to get out of the Fire, but never are they to emerge therefrom ..."'[136]

He said: 'It is as He the Majestic said.' He was asked: 'Then why

did whoever entered it enter, and why did whoever got out of it get out?' He said: 'They had committed sins in the worldly life, for which Allāh punished them, then He brought them out for what He knew in their hearts of faith and belief.'

He also used to say: 'O people! Beware severing the ties of kinship, for Allāh—the Exalted—says:

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِى
تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِۦ وَٱلْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ①

> "And fear Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer."[137]

It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: 'Fear Allāh and maintain the ties of kinship, for it is more lasting for you in this life and better for you in the Hereafter.'

A man asked Al-Ḥasan: 'O Abū Sa'īd! Which form of striving [*jihād*] is better?' He said: 'The struggle (*jihād*) against your whims.'

He used to say: 'If death does not come to one suddenly, sickness will come suddenly, so fear Allāh and be wary of surprise of your Lord.'

He used to say: 'The blessings of Allāh are too many to be fully thanked, except as much as Allāh assists, and the sins of man are too many for his salvation, except as much as Allāh forgives.'

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[136] *Al-Mā'idah* (5):37

[137] *Al-Nisā'* (4):1

He also used to say: 'I heard Bakr Ibn 'Abdullāh saying, 'May Allāh be merciful to a man who is strong, and he uses his strength in the obedience of Allāh, or who is weak and refrains from the disobedience of Allāh, the Exalted.'

He used to say: 'Lying is the root of hypocrisy.'

He used to say: 'Whoever lied has transgressed, and whoever transgressed has disbelieved, and whoever disbelieved enters Hellfire.

It is narrated that 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) used to say: 'If the person told a lie, the Angel distances himself a mile away from him due to the stench that comes out of him.'

He also used to say: 'I am not considered generous if I bring benefit to my brother, keep harm away from him or reconcile between two [quarrelling] people.'

He used to say: 'O son of Ādam! You hate people based on your assumption, and yet you ignore certain [defects] in yourself.'

He used to say: 'The chains binding the inhabitants of Hellfire are not placed on their necks because they proved too difficult for the Angels of Hellfire, but they are there so that when the flame goes out, they sink them in Hellfire.' Then, he would cry until it overcomes him saying: 'O Allāh! We seek refuge in You from the torment of Hellfire and the evil deeds that lead to it.'

He used to say: 'It is narrated that a pious man saw another pious man [who had passed away] in his sleep, so he asked him, 'What did you find?' He said: 'We found what we put forth, and we lost

what we postponed.' Al-Ḥasan added: 'Now, go forth with insight.'

He also used to say: 'It is said that some people spoke about asceticism in the presence of Al-Zuhrī, so he said: 'The ascetic is the one who does not let the unlawful overcome his patience, or let the lawful overcome his gratitude.'

Abū Bakr Al-Muzanī used to say: 'What do you think the Creator of dignity is going to do to those who desire His dignity, and what do you think the Creator of humiliation is going to do those who desire His humiliation, when he is capable of both?'

He used to say: 'Beware of procrastination and wishful thinking, for they have ruined those before you. I was told that Abū Hāzim used to say: 'We do not want to die until we repent, and [yet] we do not want to repent until we die. Whoever of us meets Allāh as an unrepentant criminal will enter Hellfire, and wretched is the destination.'

He used to say: 'It is reported that Anas Ibn Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'The Messenger (ﷺ) was giving the Friday sermon while leaning on a tree stem. When the congregation grew, a bigger wooden pulpit was made for him [from tamarisk], consisting of two steps. When he stood on it, the stem longed for him (ﷺ).' Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said: 'I heard the wood whimpering like the infatuated, and it kept whimpering until he (ﷺ) came down and hugged it, so it quietened down.'[138]

Whenever Al-Ḥasan mentioned this ḥadīth, he would cry and say: 'O servants of Allāh! The stem whimpered in yearning for the Messenger (ﷺ) for his rank in the Sight of Allāh the Exalted. By

[138] Tirmidhī, #3627 and *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, 1/268. It is authentic narration.

Allāh, you are more entitled to long for meeting him (ﷺ).'

He used to say: 'It is narrated that a pious man saw some people making wishes, so he said: 'I will wish along with you.' They said: 'What do you wish for, may Allāh be merciful to you?' He said: 'I wish we were not created, and I wish that after we were created we would not die. I also wish that after we die we would not be resurrected, and I wish that after we are resurrected we would not be held to account. I wish that after we are held to account we would not be punished, and I wish that if we are punished it would not be for eternity.'

Abū'l-'Alā' Al-Ma'arrī phrased some of that in the form of poetry, so he said:

Oh, I wish we lived a life without death
Forever, or died a death without resurrection

Al-Ḥasan used to say: 'There were people before you with brighter hearts and roughened clothing, and today you are weaker in religion and harder in heart than them.'

He used to say: 'A persons grief over his sin is a motive to give it up, and his regret over it is a motive to repent from it. A man may keep grieving over his sin until it is more beneficial to him than some of his good deeds.'

He used to say: 'Whoever does not treat himself from the illness of sins during his life, then how far is he from healing, and how close is he to wretchedness in the Hereafter after his death!'

He also used to say: 'The truth is bitter and only endured by one who knows it's good consequence, hoped for the reward and feared the punishment.'

He also used to say: 'I was a contemporary to people, who when presented with what is lawful for them, one of them would say: 'I have no need for it, and I fear it might corrupt me.'

He used to say: 'If you prayed during the night until your back bends, and fasted during the day until your body becomes ill, it will not benefit you except if you had sincere devoutness.'

He used to say: 'None of the voluntary good deeds outweighs kindness to the parents, not even pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) nor *jihād*.'

He also used to say: 'It is conveyed from 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he used to say: 'Mention Hellfire frequently, for its heat is intense, its bottom is far deep, and its maces are made from iron.'

Salamah Ibn 'Āmir narrates: 'We prayed Friday prayers with Al-Ḥasan, and when we were done, we gathered around him and he began weeping intensely, so we said: 'Why do you cry, may Allāh be merciful to you, when you have been promised Paradise in your dream?' His weeping became more intense, and he said: 'How can I not cry when if one of the Messenger's (ﷺ) Companions entered upon us (right now) through the door of this *masjid*, he would not recognise except the *qiblah* [towards which we pray]?' Then he added, 'How far! How far! Wishful thinking ruined people; words without deeds, knowledge without perseverance and belief without certainty. Why do I see people without intellects, and hear faint sounds without seeing a traveller or a companion? People have, by Allāh, entered then left, knew then denied and forbade then allowed. The faith of one of you is a spoonful on his tongue; when he is asked: 'Do you believe in the Day of Judgement?' He says: 'Yes!' He is a liar, by the Sovereign of the Day of Recompense!

The believer's characteristics include strength of faith, firmness in kindness, belief with certainty, knowledge in patience, patience in knowledge, cleverness in gentleness, adornment in poverty, moderation in wealth, mercy for the exhausted, fulfilment of rights and fairness in uprightness. He does not treat whom he hates unjustly, and he does not commit sin while helping whom he loves. He does not scorn, exchange derisive glances, mock, talk idly, trifle, play, backbite, follow what is not for him, deny what is rightfully due, transgress in fate, gloat at the misfortune of others or rejoice at the calamity that befalls someone else.

The believer is humbly submissive in his prayer and hastens to *zakah*. His words are healing, his endurance is piety, his silence is pondering and his looks are to take warning. He mingles with scholars to learn, he remains silent amongst them to avoid harm and he talks to gain benefit. If he does well, he rejoices, and if he does ill, he asks for forgiveness. If he is reproached, he conciliates, if he is wronged, he endures, if he is treated unfairly, he endures, and if faced with injustice, he is just. He seeks refuge in none other than Allāh, and seeks help from no one besides Allāh. He is venerable in public, grateful in solitude, content with provision, thankful for prosperity and patient in paucity. Despair does not take control of him and avarice does not overtake him. If he sits with the noisy, he is written among those who remember Allāh,* and if he sits with those who remember Allāh, he is written among the careless.**

The believer is bright-faced, good mannered, generous and freehanded and maintains the ties of kinship. He maintains the ties of kinship when others sever them, he endures when he is

* Meaning he is self-aware and constant in silent dhikr.

** Meaning he does away with having self-worth and risks feeling conceited.

harmed, he respects when he is degraded. He endures grievance and perseveres in trials. The worldly life is insignificant to him, so he built no house and renewed no clothing therein. He has good faith in Allāh and never has poor expectations of Him.

The believer is polite, gentle, pious, pure, content and not stung twice from the same hole. His colour is pale,[139] his hair is messy and he is rarely greedy. He is clever in his religious matters and naive in his worldly affairs.

The believer is highly venerable, generous to his neighbour, obedient to the Compeller and one who flees from the torment of Hellfire. His soul testifies to knowing Allāh, his organs remember Allāh and his hand is extended with kindness. He is burdened with holding himself to account, and people are relieved from his evil.

The believer is truthful in his promise, easy to content and difficult to anger. He learns when he is taught and he understands when things are explained to him. Whoever befriends him is saved, and whoever accompanies him attains. His mind is perfect, his deeds are abundant, his hopes are low, his manners are good, and his anger is restrained.'

Then he wept, and made us weep.

He added, 'So were the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ), one by one, until they passed away to Allāh the Exalted, and so were the early righteous Muslims. Things changed for you when you changed.' Then he recited the verse:

[139] Due to long periods of worship and being in a constant state of fear and hope.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا۟ مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ
وَإِذَآ أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوٓءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُۥ ۚ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ مِن
وَالٍ ﴿١١﴾

> "Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allāh intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron."[140]

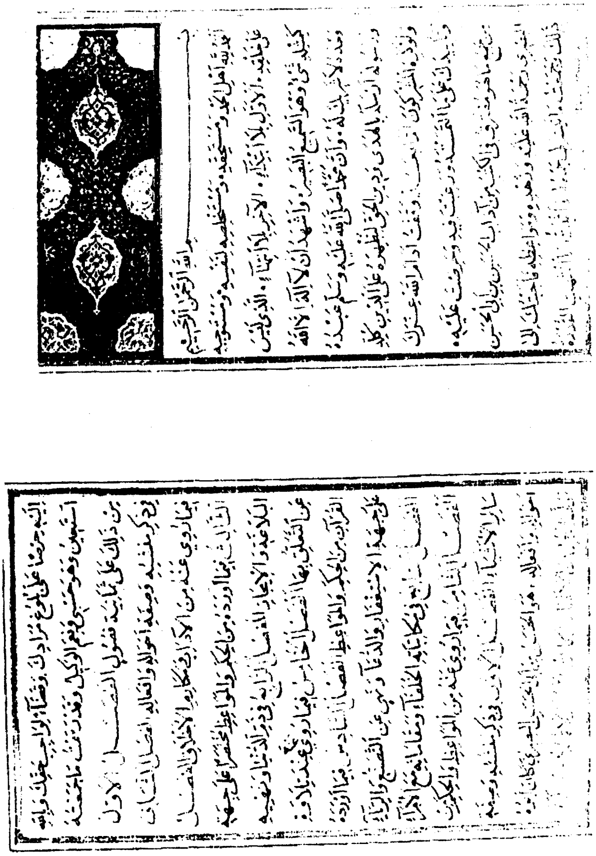
Then Al-Ḥasan said:

'O our Lord! Bestow your blessings on our master, Muḥammad, and his purified Family; grant us what You grant your devout servants and pious allies, for You are Competent over everything, and Helper towards every good.

Sufficient for us is Allāh, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.'

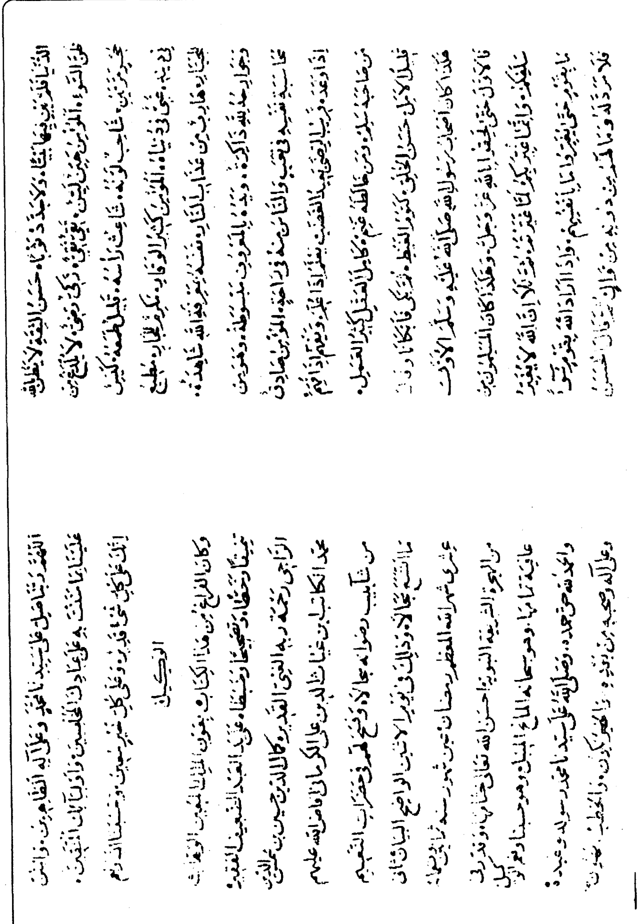
140 *al-Ra'd* (13):11

PICTURE PLATES OF THE FIRST PAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT



صورة اللوحة الأولى من المخطوط

PICTURE PLATES OF THE LAST PAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT



صورة اللوحة الأخيرة من المخطوط

THE BEACON OF BASRA

ETIQUETTE, WISDOM AND ASCETICISM OF ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ

Imām Ibn al-Jawzī

There are many individuals who left a profound mark in Islām's history; few however, combined within them virtues and qualities that are rarely found in one person. Such was Abū Sa'īd Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, the Tabi'i, the Imām of elevated rank, the exegete of the Qur'ān, the jurist, the one known for immense worship and given to much asceticism and reflection. Abundant knowledge has been gathered and preserved and passed down the centuries through him.

It is enough of a testimony to appreciate the status of Al-Ḥasan than the words of the famous Companion, Abdullah ibn 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb who said, "Had the Prophet (ﷺ) met Al-Ḥasan, he would have been pleased with him."

Every work written on the character of Al-Ḥasan attests to his close resemblance and likeness to that of a Sahabi (Companion of the Prophet ﷺ) in terms of his manners and etiquette and worldly outlook. In this short work penned by Ibn Al-Jawzī, he highlights certain aspects of Al-Ḥasan's life, his morals and the words of deep wisdom and contemplation he is known for. Readers will no doubt, be moved by Al-Ḥasan's scattered gems and be inspired to evaluate life's priorities and renew their own religious commitments.

The author, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), was a learned scholar possessing extensive knowledge. While still young, he became known as someone who was religious and given to learning. He would not waste his time in idle activities and would scrupulously avoid any food whose source was doubtful. He was a great preacher and his fame was widespread; many people repented and accepted Islām at his hands. He was also a prolific writer and authored over one thousand works encompassing a multitude of Islāmic disciplines and sciences.

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